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Murder without tears

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MURDER WITHOUT TEARS; AN ANTHO
CUPPY, WILLIAM JACOB

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MURDER
without Tears

MURDER
without Tears

**AN ANTHOLOGY OF
CRIME**

Edited by WILL CUPPY

H. H. C. 2.1
New York

SHERIDAN HOUSE • PUBLISHERS

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Introduction

ALL that is needed here, I believe, is a disarming little foreword addressed to the more thoughtful readers of crime literature and to reviewers who might not see all the merits of this volume at first glance without a few helpful hints from me.

But how shall I say it? Shall I be firm? Or shy? Shall I try the slightly erudite approach? Since that always goes well in a preface, I could use a neat Latin phrase at this point. *E Pluribus Unum* will have to do.

For one thing, I might explain the title, "Murder without Tears." A lovely title, you must agree, but what does it mean? Simply that this collection of real and fictional crimes tends to include pieces which may make you smile for one reason or another; in a few instances, because of the matter set down, but more often by some grace of manner in the doing thereof.

If you wonder why I chose that particular slant for a murderous anthology, I'm afraid I did it mostly to please myself. I prefer that sort of thing when I read about murders and I am not terribly interested in the other kinds, solemn, agonized, unduly philosophical, frankly wallowing in gore and so forth. I am probably not a genuine connoisseur. I trust I am not an unfeeling brute.

Murder itself is not funny. But let me remind you that William Roughead, than whom no greater crime writer exists, when chided for treating the subject rather too humorously, gave it as his opinion that the unrelieved recital of the horrible makes but sorry reading.

I have also noticed that overly earnest purveyors of murder are weak on other accounts as well. I almost shed tears myself when I discovered that a certain piece by one of

these gentry about a celebrated killer I needed in my gallery was not only ponderous and tiresome but that it failed to give the facts. It was just no good and I had to sneak my famous fiend in by another door.

Which only confirms my theory that crime experts who are either unwilling or unable to lighten their gruesome material with a touch of style and spirit—yes, even a smile or two—are incomplete specimens. Some small portion of the cerebral cortex is probably missing or in a rudimentary state. Something is wrong somewhere.

And so, when I was asked by my publisher to produce a crime book forthwith, I soon found myself rushing hither and yon in the rather restricted field of authors who could appear in a volume entitled you know what without throwing the whole project out of kilter. It was the pleasantest way for me.

You will see, Gentle Reader, that I had only to pick the right authors and they did all the rest. For the opening section, "Murder in Real Life," there were naturals for the asking. If you drop a tear now and then, as you may, it will be with a difference. You're pretty sure to choke up, and not from laughter, in one of the pieces which I shan't name at the moment.

If barking my own wares were not completely foreign to my nature, and bad business besides, I might have said a kind word for my second exhibit, "Murder with Morals," taken from that amazing work, "The Newgate Calendar," my own ancient copy of which, in four volumes, has long been one of my favorite bedside companions.

Should you ask what is so amusing about a lot of sordid crimes in the really pathetic squalor of eighteenth century London and elsewhere, I simply leave those who are unfamiliar with the work of Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin, shadowy perpetrators of the Calendar, to find out what it's all about, and I wish them joy. Let me add that the account of Catherine Hayes in this section is not funny at all.

I included Catherine in mere justice to a much neglected murderess of the period.

In the fiction department, "Murder and Mystery," I point with pride—I simply can't help it—to certain stories where detectives and all the standard properties of Mystery Land are either entirely absent or lurking in the background. And to others where these phenomena are, right in there working for your edification and entertainment. Dyed-in-the-wool whodunit fans will find my own final comment implicit somewhere in the concluding masterpiece by Stephen Leacock.

My thanks to all who gave me advice, good or bad, while "Murder without Tears" was assembling. To be sure, one authority whose brains I was happily picking, in the fond belief that it could last forever, developed what I took to be a slight allergy to Uncle Will as time went on and on. God bless James Sandoe and grant him patience.

Moreover, the learned Earle F. Walbridge volunteered much excellent counsel and the great Ellery Queen himself, after I had raided his Mystery Magazine for more than one gem, was kind enough to suggest still another with the heartiest good will.

Now go on with the story.

WILL CUPPY

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M U R D E R
I N R E A L L I F E

What Makes a Good Murder?

EDMUND PEARSON

THE amateur collector of murders is a much more discriminating person than the chance observer understands. He is often a determined antiquarian and reactionary; when any new murder comes out he bends his attention toward an old one. From the crude performance of the super-bandit of the present year, he turns again to consider Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, found, in 1678, transfixed by a sword, and he ponders once more the significance of the drops of wax discovered on Sir Edmund's clothes.

Or, disgusted by the blatant taste of the Chicago school of murderers, he returns to the first murder of all, that Cain-Abel affair. He prefers his murders to be mellowed by time; to possess the rich bloom of age. There is an especially exacting murder-fancier—and nobody who knows him questions his perfect taste—who refuses to add to his collection any specimen of a later year than 1815. For him, as for Mr. Bunthorne, art stopped short in the cultivated court of the Empress Josephine.

This, however, is really finical. Style, not time nor place, is the thing to be considered. The essentials were firmly established in De Quincey's great essay on murder, which everybody quotes and nobody reads. But for any one attempting to discuss a book about murders, some acquaintance with De Quincey's essay is necessary.

The first section of this masterpiece appeared in 1827. Let's get its title correctly quoted: it is called "On Murder

Considered as one of the Fine Arts." Twelve years later, in 1839, came out the "Supplementary Paper" on the same subject, while as late as 1854, De Quincey added the final postscript, with its narratives of the Williams and the M'Kean murders—two examples of sombre prose which have been the despair of all writers on this subject.

This trilogy should be studied, not only by the historians of actual murders, but by the writers of detective novels. Many of these gentlemen and ladies seem determined to rob the homicides of which they write of all possible interest.

This failure to recognize the elementary principles of an attractive murder is characteristic of many who should be better informed. Not long ago I happened to sit at luncheon opposite the editor of a literary review who is also a teacher at Yale. Turning his sardonic eye upon me, he mentioned some vulgar slaughter which had been filling the newspapers for two days, and remarked, pityingly:

"I suppose *you* are right in your element with this!"

The poor creature had never read what De Quincey wrote, over a century before: ". . . as to old women, and the mob of newspaper readers, they are pleased with anything, provided it is bloody enough. But the mind of sensibility requires something more."

De Quincey's first precept is that "something more goes into the composition of a fine murder than two blockheads to kill and be killed—a knife—a purse—and a dark lane." Here at the start we have ruled out from the class of first-rate murders—and, I think, justly ruled out—most of the killings by crooks, "bad-men," bandits of all degrees and all the light-hearted slayings of night-watchmen and police officers by burglars and thieves.

Gerald Chapman's crime was the coldly casual removal of an obstacle between himself and his liberty; he murdered as another man might stamp on a beetle. And although his trial had some points of interest, he and his kind do not belong in the gallery of murderers who are coveted by the collector.

This may also be said of the person who commits a political assassination. It is a stroke of state; ill-advised and most reprehensible, it is true, but of no interest to the amateur. Usually the practitioner (De Quincey's word) is not even acquainted with his victim, so that the deed has about it a flavor of unpardonable familiarity. Charlotte Corday saw this clearly and tried to make some pretence to the social decencies by sending in her card, and after she was admitted, engaging Marat in light conversation. There was also the intimate touch that the statesman was in his bath. This, however, is the only political assassination, so far as I remember, which had even those engaging features. Besides, in the assassination there is the graver fault that your victim is already famous, so what becomes of the artist's work of creation? It is too much like those absurd plays in which Napoleon, George Washington and Marie Antoinette are all on the stage at once.

I have heard an ingenious argument made in favor of political murders in which the subject is obscure, or only a minor celebrity. This would probably include Doctor Cronin, whose death convulsed this country about forty years ago. His murder, in Chicago, was magniloquently described by its historian as "The Crime of the Century," but anybody with the faintest knowledge of Chicago will remember that that city has a Crime of the Century every four or five years,—and is, moreover, intensely jealous and sensitive about the claims of other cities to any superior kind of murder. Doctor Cronin was said to have offended the Clann-Gael by revealing its secrets, but it is hard to say what he had done. It was one of those murders over which men nod their heads and look portentous and intimate that "everything hasn't come out yet."

To be the participant either active or passive, in a murder, for revealing the pass-word and signals of a secret society, is most futile. I have belonged to only one secret society, and I am still bound, I suppose, by a number of blistering

oaths not to utter its mysteries. But if I became filled with desire to experience the awful joy of making them known, and to involve the brethren in the duty instantly to exterminate me, I should be put to the gravest inconvenience, because I cannot possibly remember what the secrets are.

There was once a person, an Italian, I think, who did give a certain distinction to the regrettable habit of the murder of total strangers. His bizarre practice has been described by Mr. Arthur Train. He called himself The Bravest Man—just that, without any qualification of time or place, and the way he proved his title was to go forth on the street, now and then, and shoot a man. His method of selection, if he had any, is not related; probably it was first come, first served. It may be that he obeyed De Quincey's dictum that the victim of a murder ought to be in good health, since it is barbarous to kill anybody who is weak or of a sickly disposition.

It may, perhaps, become tedious to go on ruling out this and that class of murder, insisting that these are not good murders,—not desirable specimens for the collector. Yet, with diffidence, even with a good deal of timidity, I must suggest that one eminent brand of murder is usually not of the very first value to the specialist. This is called, with little accuracy, the *crime passionnel*, with even less accuracy, the sex-murder. Such a statement not only evokes cries of protest, but calls down upon one's head the most disgraceful of all epithets: that of Puritan. If you do not wish to read about sex at breakfast, luncheon and dinner, and to discuss it, or hear it discussed in the theatre in the evening, you have failed, of course, in your daily obligation to throw a stone at Queen Victoria. But your true collectors of murders do not welcome the sex-murder with the same enthusiasm with which they greet one committed, let us say, for an inheritance.

There are other reasons. One is that the themes of love and jealousy are such great themes that, when they enter a

plot, they may swamp everything else. Another reason is not at all a moral one: the murder which is not connected with sex is often the most interesting, because it is the most wicked. Only great criminals rise to the heights of a coolly planned murder of a friend or relative for gain; any weak man or woman of us may go off the handle, and kill some one because of hatred arising from the relations of the sexes. England's most atrocious criminal of our time certainly had a way with women, since he induced five or six of them to marry him. But he never let these successes blind him to his real objects, which were pounds, shillings and pence. He was a pet child of the Devil because he thrice committed murder, not for the hot passion of love, but for the colder one of avarice.

There are exceptions and they are brilliant. When Miss Madeleine Smith of Glasgow decided to abolish her socially inconvenient lover, she set about it with the apparent gentleness of the dove, but with the wisdom of seven vipers. There was not the slightest flavor of poison in the cups of cocoa which she handed, with many endearments, to the adoring young man as he stood outside her window. Had she pulverized his skull with a club, her name would long ago have perished. It lives because of the sweet subtlety of her methods, and because of Miss Madeleine's charming appearance in Court, her lavender gloves and her pretty feet and ankles—which were still a treat in those days, even to Scottish judges.

The good murder, the really desirable performance, beloved by the collector, is committed not by an habitual criminal, but by some one of blameless life. The higher his social status, the wider his learning, the more noticeable the odor of sanctity in which he has lived, the more interesting the crime. Interesting, because unaccountable. De Quincey demands mystery and he is right, for there is little charm when the murder is done in public, nor when a confession comes too soon.

He decries the works of the poisoner, which is unexplainable, for of all sly deviltry, the art of the poisoner is unsurpassed. On the other hand, a murder may be savage in its execution, yet possess so much of the element of terror, and be so cunningly planned, as to deserve the most respectful attention of the enthusiastic collector.

The victim of the good murder is not a complete stranger, nor a passing acquaintance, but preferably some one near and it may be even dear to the murderer. The act is not the result of a sudden whim, but is coolly and thoughtfully arranged; the ground is well laid in advance. Weakness and remorse, hysteria and confessions,—the ideal practitioner does not indulge in these. If he can keep his head, if he does not talk, and if he is remorseless, human society, it has been said, is at his mercy. There have been murderers so equipped, but they have usually tried to repeat their successes too many times.

Occasionally the murder is all but perfect in every detail; sometimes it is notable only for a bit of light or shade. The perfect murder is, of course, quite unattainable, and the recent endeavor to achieve it ended in one of the worst and most pitiful of failures. Contrast the slump of the two Chicago neurotics with cool little Miss Constance Kent, of the despised Victorian age. She made her plans alone and with care; she carried them out in the dark of a summer night, and when her half-brother was found with his throat cut, there were no weak-kneed confessions from her! Not until religion worked upon her conscience, five years later, did she tell what had happened that night and even then there was no whining plea for mercy in the name of Freud and Nietzsche and the distorted psyche. Modernism likes to dance but not to pay,—it prefers to hire an alienist to help cheat the piper of his fee.

We cannot always expect to discover murderesses like Constance Kent. Neither can we often find a scene so perfect as that quiet house in the humdrum street in Fall River,

apparently asleep in the sunshine. Outside one hears the drone of the August insects in the trees, and perhaps the distant whirring of the cotton mills. Inside, a ghastly business is going forward: the contrast is as strange as any I know.

But there are murders which possess some fantastic detail,—a trifle perhaps, but sufficient to give them value. There was the Reverend Mr. Richeson's cynical remark as he bought the poison; Mr. Elwell's forty glossy brown wigs; and Mrs. Bravo's liberal ideas of the proper amount of wine for another lady and herself at dinner.

And of all places in the world for quiet meditation, and for the fear of God and man to envelop the human soul, there was that early summer morning at the corner of Forty-second Street and Sixth Avenue, as Jack Rose sat on the steps of Bridgie Webber's poker joint and felt terror come over him for the past night's work. Rosenthal was dead, and the "big cop," Becker, had promised them that it would be all right. But the lamps were out in the streets and the hard light of dawn made everything seem cold and unsympathetic.

"To croak a guy" was not so casual a thing as it had been the night before, and the gambler was rather sick.

Perhaps—unpleasant thought—the law was not a joke after all!

Rules for Murderesses

~~~~~

EDMUND PEARSON

“A WOMAN with fair opportunities,” said Thackeray, “and without an absolute hump, may marry whom she likes.”

That is an understatement. A woman's privileges are even greater—for if she will observe a few restrictions she may *murder* whom she likes. It is three to one that she will go scotfree. If she is treated with severity it is because she has disregarded one of the obvious rules.

I have been looking over the histories of about thirty more or less charming ladies who have chafed under the suspicion of having removed some person or persons from the earth by violent means. They are the more remarkable of the sisterhood and range in time from Miss Mary Blandy, who fell foul of the law more than a century and a half ago, down to Mrs. Le Boeuf of Louisiana, whose name figured grimly in the newspapers in 1929.

The women who appear in my survey have dotted the earth from the rainy Scottish moors, where Katherine Nairn made her home, to the burning plains of the Punjab, where flourished Mrs. Fullam of Agra and Meerut.

Augusta Fullam, although little known to fame in America, was one of the most extraordinary of all time. It was she who penned that Napoleonic sentence, admirable alike for terseness and decision:

“So the only thing is to poison the soup.”

Eight of the thirty women—three of whom lived more



than a century ago—actually paid the law's highest price. These eight, who perished at the hands of the executioner, chosen as they are from the records of one hundred and seventy years, are women who disregarded one of the great rules for murderesses. And this brings me back to my remark at the beginning: that the wise murderess will take care to observe a few simple restrictions. She overrides these at her peril. Briefly, the regulations are as follows:

1. *If you decide to murder your husband you must never act in concert with a lover.*

In comment upon this rule it must be added that a lover should appear nowhere in the record; not a sign, not a suspicion, not even a shoe lace of his. The careful murderess of her husband removes him, unaided, and then proceeds, helped by a clever lawyer, to blacken the dead man's character. This is always successful, and very popular: she usually becomes a heroine.

All women who find their husbands annoying—and it is astonishing how many there are of these—make her cause their own. By the time the trial is over, people are wondering how so wicked a man as the dead husband was allowed, by Heaven, to live as long as he did.

2. *It is inadvisable for a maidservant to murder her mistress under circumstances of extreme barbarity.*

Kate Webster, about fifty years ago, in England, killed her mistress for the purpose of robbery. Webster was a big, muscular and rather savage-looking woman; her employer, Mrs. Thomas, was small and frail and alone in the house. Webster was heard by the neighbors pounding and chopping, and was afterward known to be boiling something in the copper wash boiler.

A day later she was making calls on her friends and joining them at tea, carrying with her a small black bag. When still later the disappearance of Mrs. Thomas and the flight of Webster began to be investigated the black bag was found and its contents examined. Thereafter, throughout Great

Britain, Kate Webster was regarded with considerable distaste, and this never ceased nor diminished until the sentence of the law was executed.

Webster blundered at every opportunity. She made the mistake of operating in England, instead of America, and of limiting her murders to one. As I hope to show, by further examples, a woman's immunity from severe punishment increases according to the number of persons she murders.

*3. Even in the murder of a father or mother the astute murderess will take care that no lover appears upon the scene.*

Plain murder is often forgiven by a jury. But murder combined with a love-affair is almost always disapproved. The feeling is that somebody has been having too much fun. The famous Miss Mary Blandy, of Henley-upon-Thames, found certain obstacles in the way of her marriage with Captain the Honorable William Cranstoun, a Scot of ancient lineage. One of these—or, rather, two of them—were the captain's wife and daughter. More serious, however, was her father's dislike of Cranstoun. Still, as Mr. Blandy was old and a man of wealth, and as Miss Mary was his only heir, almost anything might happen. So the captain sent his sweetheart some powders, described as a "love philtre," and supposed to awake, in the old gentleman, sentiments of warmest affection for military men in general and for Captain Cranstoun in particular.

Miss Blandy administered these powders to her father—in his tea and in his gruel—and continued to administer them, even when, so far from causing him to conceive a liking for the captain, they merely made him very ill. Finally he died of them; Cranstoun fled to Europe; and the officers of the Crown hanged Miss Blandy upon a gallows at Oxford. She died with notable modesty, however, remarking as she climbed the ladder:

"Gentlemen, do not hang me high, for the sake of decency!"

A hundred and forty years later in Massachusetts a similar situation arose, with far different results. A lady of about Miss Blandy's age, and also the heiress of a wealthy father, fell under grievous suspicion of having caved in his head—and also that of her stepmother—with a hatchet. Her name was Miss Lizzie Borden, and the State showed evidence of motive, animus, opportunity and guilty knowledge of the crimes. Indeed, it has been very hard to understand how anyone except the lady could have committed the two murders, at an interval of more than an hour, and escaped unseen.

Some cynical persons, weary of the hymns to her innocence chanted by her admirers, suggested that perhaps the old people murdered each other. And a newspaper man offered the sarcastic theory that the shocking wounds on the heads of the victims should be disregarded and, in view of the warm weather at the time of the tragedy, the deaths should be put down to heat prostration.

One thing, however, the law could not show, and that was the existence of any love-affair. Despite unsubstantial gossip, nothing appears in the record about any entanglement with a man. The jury had a fine disregard for logical proof and preferred to rest on the theory that what seemed unheard of, was therefore impossible. The State asked them to believe that the lady secretary of the Young People's Society for Christian Endeavor had, in broad daylight, and in the manner of a Mohawk warrior, attacked and slain two elderly persons with a hatchet or an ax—one of the sufferers being her own father.

The gossip of some of the townsfolk, in order to account for the mysterious absence of bloodstains on her clothes, went still farther and advanced the fantastic theory that she had given the scene an unusual flavor of indelicacy by stripping herself stark naked before she commenced the slaughter.

This orgiastic touch does not appear, of course, in the

case for the State, but it is a favorite legend, always related when the tale of the crime is told. It is even set down in print, as if it were an accepted fact, by Mr. Algernon Blackwood, the novelist of the supernatural and the *macabre*. And this not in a novel, but in his memoirs—from his recollections of newspaper days.

No lover appeared (except in vague gossip) on Miss Borden's even most distant horizon. The jury promptly acquitted her amid the ecstatic applause of hundreds of persons, who were content with the simple assertion that "a woman couldn't do such a thing." The lady retired to a life of affluence; to a pleasant villa, to theatre parties, motor cars and improving travel. And after thirty-five years of this agreeable existence she passed on as serenely, and as little troubled by horrific visions, I have no doubt, as any of the rest of us.

A woman couldn't possibly do such a thing! How often that is said, even by persons who have heard all that happened on that dreadful night in Mr. Snyder's bedchamber when Mrs. Snyder entered with the picture cord and the window weight.

4. *If you commit murder for insurance money or for mere pleasure make it wholesale. Never stop at one.*

This regulation bears with equal force against men; women are not especially restricted at this point. The person who kills some one obscure individual, who does it quietly and with moderate civility, is in a rather perilous position. Perilous, that is, for a murderer. There are about three chances in a hundred that he may be executed.

It is the wholesale poisoner, or the shockingly cruel and unusual murderer, who attracts the sob sisters and sob brothers of the yellow press; causes quack alienists to rally to his defense like buzzards around a carcass; invites the windiest oratory and the most unmitigated flapdoodle from his attorneys; and finally, if he be convicted at all, makes thousands of person move heaven and earth, slander the

living and vilify the dead, in order to save his precious body alive.

Mrs. Lydia Sherman, who confessed that she poisoned three husbands and eight children, has been described in this book.

"Of course," someone will say, "she was insane."

There is really no "of course" about it. She was well aware of what she was doing, and was careful to be furtive and to try to avoid detection. She never acted on an "irresistible impulse" to kill these people; there was never a time when she could not have controlled herself if she had been observed. The deaths of these persons brought her profit, or they relieved her of care and annoyance. The qualities of selfishness and callous disregard for others—qualities present in all of us to some degree—were developed in her to an unusual extent, and she slew people as you or I would kill a mosquito, or as some folk will club an egret to death for its feathers, or shoot a sea-gull *pour le sport*.

Sarah Jane Robinson of Massachusetts also illustrates the fact that the poisoner when discovered is usually no greenhorn at the business. One or two successes always create boldness and she proceeds upon her career.

Mrs. Robinson did not confine her efforts to her immediate family, but went farther afield. In her enthusiasm for insurance and in her skill with arsenic she is generally supposed to have included in her attentions a brother-in-law, a nephew, and even her landlord, a gentleman called Oliver Sleeper. These, added to her husband, her son and her daughter, brought her total score up to at least six persons. It was on account of the death of her brother-in-law, named Prince Arthur Freeman, that the courts at last put an end to her activities. When it came to allowing a lady—"an American mother"—to perish, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts proved as tender as the rest and Mrs. Robinson was permitted to retire to prison and to loud and sanctimonious professions of religion.

In the same state, Miss Jane Toppan, "dear Aunt Jane," arose to a brief but disturbing fame. Miss Toppan, whose real name was Honora Kelly—not all of New England's sins come from Plymouth Rock—was a nurse. She was much in demand for her warm-hearted, motherly, big-bosomed and gracious presence—simply beaming with health and good spirits; the very personification of healing. It is not surprising if death sometimes follows the arrival of a nurse: we do not call in these helpers for trivial ailments. Yet death seemed to follow in strange and perplexing forms when dear Aunt Jane was around. And when investigations began, the startled physicians and officers were suddenly aware that they had pried the lid off a section of hell into which none of them had ever peered.

With a few exclamations the cover was quickly replaced: Aunt Jane was put in an insane asylum and the greater part of her history remains unknown to this day. Except to a very few, it was never known. To the established facts, which account for four or five poisonings, a great many robberies and one case of arson, there is added, in legend and gossip, the tale of an enormous list of murders—ten, twenty, forty—which may or may not have any foundation in fact. A nurse's opportunities are many, yet the popular tendency is always to exaggerate.

Four of her murders were committed within forty-eight days and some of these seem to have had no motive but sheer sadism. Yet the distinguished alienist, Doctor C. F. Folsom, who vouched for her "moral insanity," says that from 1892 to 1900—or the last eight years of her career—she had the reputation of being "the best nurse in Cambridge." Furthermore, until her crimes became known, "of all the many people who knew Miss Toppan there was not one who . . . had the least thought of her being in any form or degree insane or a degenerate, defective, mental or moral imbecile, or, poetically speaking, even a deviate."

Of Mrs. Gunness, beloved and perpetual heroine of the

Sunday newspapers, and of her Indiana "murder farm" it is unnecessary to speak. Nearly everybody in America has heard of her and her wondrous success in tempting middle-aged Scandinavians and Teutons into putting all their bank deposits into their pockets and joining her in her rural home: object, matrimony. And of how these trusting gentlemen thereupon vanished from human sight, never to be met with again, until the exhumations began.

Mrs. Gunness never came into conflict with the law. She disappeared. If she had been arrested I have no manner of doubt that she could have found a lawyer unscrupulous enough to foul the characters of all her victims and represent her as a lamb of innocence. She could have hired an alienist or psychiatrist to testify that she played with dolls as a child and was, therefore, subject to a complex which made it impossible to hold her responsible for anything whatever.

Chocolate creams masked the deadly purposes of the Englishwoman Christiana Edmunds and the American, Cordelia Botkin. Each struck with a cruel disregard of consequences; Miss Edmunds put strychnine in her confections while Mrs. Botkin adhered to the simple and inexpensive recipe so long favored by lady poisoners: powdered arsenic.

Miss Christiana Edmunds conceived the brilliant notion of removing the doctor's wife. That lady was practically an apple-a-day in Miss Edmunds' life, since she was keeping the doctor away from his adoring Christiana. She modestly prepared her sweets and took them with her to tea at the doctor's house. The plan was discovered, however, and both doctor and doctor's wife told Miss Edmunds, quite plainly, that a gift of chocolate creams, plus strychnia, constituted a breach of friendship which they were not disposed to pardon.

How was the rejected one to regain favor in their sight? A happy thought: simply by poisoning all, or nearly all, the chocolates at the local confectioner's and thereby, in the face of a general slaughter of the townsfolk, put the blame

upon the confectioner. So she slipped her deadly chocolates into his stock. Only one victim perished, however—a little boy—and in spite of the judge's remark about method in her madness, the jury found Miss Edmunds to be mentally incompetent.

Mrs. Botkin struck from across the continent. Her loaded bonbons travelled by mail from California to Delaware and poisoned six harmless people—four women and two children. Two of the women died. All were unknown to Mrs. Botkin, but one of them was the wife of the California lady's lover. Mrs. Botkin, thanks to the uncertainty of the courts and laxity of the law, spent some years—with many privileges—confined in jail. Her husband's name was one of the incongruities of the case. In view of her aversion from him, it is amusing to learn that he was christened Welcome A. Botkin.

Mrs. Fullam of Agra (whose astounding tale was in the English newspapers in 1913) used to write to Lieutenant Clark:

Thy way, not mine, O Lord  
However dark it be;  
Lead me by thine own hand,  
Choose out the path for me.  
I dare not choose my lot,  
I would not if I might;  
Choose Thou for me, my God,  
Then shall I walk aright.

She would copy these model verses and add: "These lines are just what my poor sentiments now express, Harry darling, my own very precious sweetheart."

All the Fullams and Clarks were queerly inspired when they took pen in hand. The lieutenant used to write to his wife, saying:

"I am fed up with your low disgusting ways, for I am quite sure you don't care a damn what becomes of me."

Then he would sign himself:



"With fond love and kisses to self, and the rest at home,  
I remain

Your affectionate husband,  
H. L. Clark."

The four persons in the tangle were Lieutenant and Mrs. Clark of the Indian Medical Service, and Mr. and Mrs. Fullam of the Military Accounts Department. Mrs. Fullam was purely English; the others, I believe, were Eurasian. Clark and Mrs. Fullam, desiring the total destruction of Mrs. Clark and Mr. Fullam, contrived, not without difficulty, and the writing of hundreds of incriminating letters, to slay Mr. Fullam. It was during their campaign that Mrs. Fullam wrote the sentence about the soup, which I quoted earlier in this chapter.

Clark was rather brutal in appearance and manner. He was given, among other more commonplace diversions, to the curious sport of "duck fighting," a fact which makes me form a low opinion of his character. The man who forces such agreeable birds into combat seems to be somewhat lacking in the finer sensibilities.

The course of slow poisoning to which Mr. Fullam was subjected was finally ended by Clark. Under pretense of acting as his physician he killed the wretched man by injections of gelsamine, an alkaloid poison.

A year later, the assassination of Mrs. Clark was carried out by hired murderers in the employ of her husband. The actual perpetrators were Indian natives, *budmashes*, or loafers from the bazaar. Their fee for work of this kind is very moderate; they came into her room at night and killed her with a sword. (The method of a "brave man," according to "The Ballad of Reading Gaol.")

When Mrs. Fullam's bungalow was searched the police found all the correspondence with Clark. It revealed the entire plot: all this evidence had been preserved with the

same fatuous care with which Bywaters kept the letters of Edith Thompson.

Mrs. Fullam was sent to prison and soon died there. One or two of the *budmashes* were hanged, and with them, I am glad to say, there also died by the noose, Lieutenant Henry Lovell William Clark, the patron of duck fights.

# *Malice Domestic*

OR

## THE BALHAM MYSTERY



W I L L I A M   R O U G H E A D

I know your mind, and here I have it for you.  
Put but a dram of this into his drink,  
Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,  
And he shall die within an hour after.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

THERE is not much mystery about Balham nowadays—unless it be why anyone should wish either to go or stay there; but in the summer of 1876 it was a name to conjure with, a word of sinister significance and power, compelling for many months the attention of the English-speaking race. The Bedford Hotel, strange stage of this strange drama, was occupied, in other than the common sense, by votaries of the bar; its precincts were invested by an army of pressmen, its doors beleaguered by the clamorous lieges; and the presiding Coroner, like an apostolic Christian, was compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses that he knew not which way to turn. The case which conferred upon an uninteresting suburb a temporary distinction still keeps its proud position as the prize puzzle of British criminal jurisprudence; and this despite the fact that while murder was indisputably done, no trial followed, neither was any person charged with the crime, though the guilty party was certainly a member of the dead man's household, and testified in the flesh at the inquest! In our leading Scots poisoning case, of which the heroine was the matchless Madeleine Smith, the

chief mystery for me has ever resided in the amazing fact of her acquittal; which likewise is my sole perplexity regarding that of her English rival, Adelaide Bartlett. More doubt attaches to the conviction of Mrs. Maybrick, whom I am disposed to deem the victim of a miscarriage of justice. But the Balham Mystery continues an unsolved riddle, a problem presented by Providence to the ingenuity of the posterities. Of course, the law officers of the Crown, and those charged with the duty of conducting the investigation, had no doubt at all where the guilt really lay; but the circumstances were such as to afford immunity to the murderer, and the sword of Justice remained undrawn.

In every poisoning case with which I am acquainted it was the possession or acquisition of the means of death that brought home the crime to the criminal; here, however, there is not the slightest evidence of either. A large dose of antimony—*pace* Dr. Pritchard, an unusual and unlikely poison for the purpose—had been introduced into the body of the murdered man; but where and when that antimony was obtained, by whom it was procured, and how administered, were points upon which there was no clear light. The one solid fact to which a study of the evidence inevitably leads is, that Charles Bravo did not commit suicide, and that death by misadventure is out of the question. He was wilfully slain by someone within his gates, by someone whose enmity he had no reason to fear and in whom he had perfect confidence, by someone who, favoured by a unique combination of chances, as well as by great coolness and cunning, contrived, in the Scots vernacular euphemism, to “cheat the wuddy” after all.

The case has been in our day admirably dealt with by an eminent hand; but having become possessed of a verbatim contemporary report of the whole affair, illustrated by most intriguing woodcuts, I am tempted to retell the story after my own fashion. That story I venture to think one of the strangest chapters in the history of crime, and as such it can

hardly be told too often, so that it be told well. I shall do my best; should it fail of interest, be mine the blame.

## I

On 7th December, 1875, at All Souls, Knightsbridge, Charles Delaunay Turner Bravo, barrister-at-law, was married to Mrs. Florence Campbell or Ricardo, widow. Both were on the sunny side of thirty, handsome, healthy, born of rich city folk; Fortune, in the fullest sense, seemed to smile upon their union. The bridegroom, who to his own name of Turner had added that of his wealthy stepfather, lived with his people at No. 2 Palace Green, Kensington. After a creditable school and college career, he had been called to the Bar, where he was diligently building up a practice, occupying chambers in Essex Court, Temple. The bride was the daughter of Mr. Robert Campbell, of Buscot Park, Berks, and No. 37 Lowndes Square. She had married in 1864, at the age of nineteen, a young officer of the Guards, named Ricardo, but the venture turned out badly. There were faults on both sides. The Captain proved more attentive to his bottle than to his bride; the lady consulted her elderly physician, and availed herself of his pharmacy to an undue extent. Divorce was spoken of; but in the end the parties agreed to a voluntary separation, the wife receiving an annual allowance of £1200. In 1871, when the warrior finally laid down his arms, it was found that he had omitted to revoke the will made in his wife's favour on their marriage, so his widow was consoled by an income of between £3000 and £4000 a year. Mrs. Ricardo then lived at Streatham Hill; and in 1874 she removed to a larger house, The Priory, Bedford Hill Road, Balham. Included in the new establishment was a lady friend, also widowed, named Mrs. Jane Cannon Cox, who had been for some years her paid companion. This lady, who hailed from Jamaica, where her husband had died, leaving her with little money and a small family, received assistance and advice from Mr. Joseph Bravo, the well-to-do step-

father of the barrister, who himself had large interests in the island. At his suggestion she invested her inconsiderable means in renting a house in Lancaster Road, Notting Hill, with a view to letting it furnished; he also placed her three boys in St. Anne's Asylum School at Streatham. Thus, by the benevolent aid of Mr. Bravo senior, Mrs. Cox's burden was substantially lightened, and she added to her resources by going out as a daily governess. Among the pupils privileged to enjoy her educational care were the children of Mrs. Ricardo's solicitor, Mr. Brooks, at whose house the ladies met and liked one another; and their intimacy increasing, Mrs. Ricardo offered Mrs. Cox the position of companion, with a salary of £100 a year. That the middle-aged, unprepossessing, indigent gentlewoman should be attracted to the rich and beautiful young widow is not surprising; what Florence Ricardo saw desirable in the West Indian relict is another story. Be the fact as it may, it was, for her, a fatal hour when she first set eyes upon the uninviting countenance of Jane Cannon Cox. That lady had indeed, as the phrase is, fallen on her feet. She passed at once from toil and penury to a luxurious and easy life. The housekeeping at The Priory was on a lavish scale: men and maidservants in plenty, horses and carriages enow; all the amenities of a wealthy middle-class Victorian home: verily, the ex-governess had secured what is vulgarly termed a soft job, one which she was little likely voluntarily to relinquish. And she was not treated as a dependant; her footing was that of a dear and valued friend (plus the salary); the ladies called each other by their Christian names.

Now it came to pass that one day Jane was moved to pay a visit of gratitude to Mr. Joseph Bravo, her benefactor; and Florence drove her up to town, arranging to call for her later. When the carriage returned to Palace Green, Mrs. Bravo invited Mrs. Ricardo to come in; she did so, and was by Mrs. Cox introduced to the family, including the son of the house, who happened (for his sins) to be present. Soon

afterwards, when the ladies went to Brighton for a change, whom should they meet in the King's Road but young Charles Bravo, who had followed them from town. So rapidly did the acquaintance ripen that when in the autumn the Brighton episode terminated, Charles and Florence had become engaged. The path of true love presenting none of the customary obstacles—the widow was handsomely dowered, and Mr. Joseph Bravo settled on his stepson £20,000, payable on the death of the last surviving parent—there was nothing to delay their happiness, so the couple were married in a month. The sole discordant note was struck by Mrs. Bravo senior, who disliked her daughter-in-law from the first, and declined to attend the wedding. But the beautiful bride did not trouble her head about the old lady's maternal jealousy. The honeymoon was spent at Brighton, and after a duty visit to their respective people, the happy pair took up house at The Priory in the beginning of January, 1876. They were welcomed home by the faithful Mrs. Cox, for Florence had stipulated, and Charles with a lover's complaisance had agreed, that the indispensable dame should continue to afford them the comfort of her company on the old terms.

In the opinion of friends and acquaintances, as well as in the judgment of the *Vehmgericht* of the servants' hall—that grim tribunal that sits upon us all impartially—the marriage was a success. The young couple were obviously, in the language of the day, attached; they "wrote home" enthusiastically of their mutual happiness and affection; the omens seemed wholly propitious. Mr. Bravo was inclined to be "close," and looked somewhat too narrowly at both sides of a penny; but with their ample means this idiosyncrasy was negligible. He went up to town every day, to attend the Courts or to visit his chambers, returning at eventide to dinner; his wife, whose domestic duties devolved upon her capable companion-housekeeper, drove her smart pony phaeton and pair, of which she was extremely proud, and employed the aimless leisure of a lady of that genteel period

in unnecessary shopping and the paying of perfunctory calls. But even into the most placid stream it is the practice of Fate to cast an occasional stone: Mrs. Bravo had a miscarriage in January, and again on 6th April her hope of becoming a mother received a second check. She suffered severely and made a slow recovery; it was proposed that when she was convalescent she should be taken for a change to Worthington.

Let us pause for a moment to consider the kind of house in which Charles Bravo had thus so comfortably hung up his hat. Situated at the end of Bedford Hill Road and abutting on Tooting Bec Common, The Priory is described in the contemporary account as "a stuccoed structure of that bastard style of Gothic architecture which Horace Walpole may be said to have inaugurated by the erection of Strawberry Hill." The grounds, which covered some ten acres, were well arranged and kept; there were pineries, vineries, and melon pits; and a five-acre paddock for the saddle and carriage horses, of which husband and wife were equally fond, though Charles was but an indifferent horseman. Two entrance lodges respectively accommodated coachman and gardener. The house was of three storeys, but we are here concerned only with the ground and first floors. The former contained, on the one side, the drawing-room and the dining-room; on the other, the morning-room and the library. Above the dining-room was the chamber of the married pair, next to which, over the drawing-room, was the bedroom whither, pending his wife's recovery from her indisposition, the husband had been relegated. Across the landing were two dressing-rooms, appropriated to the wedded couple. Mrs. Cox commonly slept upon the third floor, but since her friend's temporary divorce she had shared with her the conjugal couch. It should be borne in mind that the doors of Mrs. Bravo's bedroom and of that occupied by Mr. Bravo immediately adjoined, and that both faced the head of the main staircase from the hall.



## II

Tuesday, 18th April, 1876, is the crucial date in the case. At nine o'clock that morning the indefatigable Mrs. Cox might have been observed (by a reader of Mr. G. P. R. James) setting forth, fortified with a flask of sherry, upon her way to Worthing, to look for a furnished house. An hour or so later Mr. and Mrs. Bravo, attended by coachman and footman, drove in the landau to town. She dropped him at the Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street, and then went on to the Stores, where she bought "some very choice tobacco" for her lord, of whose customary brand she disapproved, returning to The Priory at two o'clock to "partake," in the language of the time, of a champagne luncheon. Meanwhile Mr. Bravo, after a more modest repast, which he described as "a jolly lunch," consumed with an uncle of his wife at St. James's Restaurant, walked to Victoria accompanied by a barrister friend, whom he invited home to dinner. Most unfortunately, this friend was engaged, but he promised to go down to The Priory next day to try the new tennis court. Mr. Bravo got home at four o'clock; cheerfully and affectionately kissed his wife, who was resting on a sofa in the morning-room; changed, and then went for an hour's ride on the Common. He was, as I have said, a bad rider; his horse bolted with him, and he came back so shaken and stiff that his wife prescribed a warm bath before dinner—quite an adventure, as appears, in mid-Victorian days.

The dinner hour was half-past seven; Mrs. Cox had not then returned; but after they had waited for her a few minutes, she arrived, and having no time to dress, immediately joined her hosts at table. The meal consisted of whiting, lamb, poached eggs on toast, and a bloater-paste savoury, of all which, excepting the fish, Mr. Bravo "partook." The wine decanted for the occasion by the butler comprised one bottle each of Burgundy and Marsala, and two bottles of sherry—surely a generous provision for three persons. Bravo

alone drank Burgundy, of which he had three glasses; the two ladies, between them, disposed of the sherry—a bottle apiece! After a brief adjournment to the morning-room, the ladies, at a quarter to nine, retired to rest. Mrs. Bravo was still, officially, an invalid; Mrs. Cox had had a tiring day; and this “intolerable deal of sack” may well have induced a desire for repose. The servants were then at supper, and Mrs. Bravo asked her friend to fetch her another drink, which that obliging dame did, in a tumbler, from the dining-room. Next, Mary Ann Kecher, the housemaid, came up to the dressing-room with a can of hot water; and her mistress, who was now undressed, bade her bring “a little Marsala.” As the girl left the dining-room with the tumbler of wine, Mr. Bravo came out of the morning-room, looked at her without speaking, and went up to his wife’s room. There, addressing her in French, presumably because of the maid, he said: “You have sent downstairs for more wine: you have drunk nearly a bottle to-day”; a just observe, to which Mrs. Bravo made no response. He then went into his own bedroom and shut the door. Thereafter, for some fifteen minutes, Mary Ann was busy putting away her mistress’s clothes in the dressing-room, after which she went into the bedroom to ask whether anything further was required, and was told by Mrs. Cox, who was still up and fully dressed, to take away the pet dogs for the night. Mrs. Bravo was in bed, apparently asleep. As the maid stood on the staircase calling the dogs, her master’s bedroom door suddenly opened and he appeared on the landing in his nightshirt, shouting loudly: “Florence! Florence! hot water! hot water!” Realising that something serious had happened, Mary Ann rushed into the ladies’ room, announcing to Mrs. Cox—who, curiously, had heard nothing of these cries for help uttered within a few feet of her—that Mr. Bravo was taken ill; and followed by the maid, that lady came out to see what was amiss. Mr. Bravo had gone back to his room and was vomiting violently out of the window. Capable Mrs. Cox at once

sent Mary Ann for hot water and mustard; when the girl returned her master had collapsed on the floor, and Mrs. Cox was rubbing his chest. What passed between that ministering angel and the sufferer, during the maid's brief absence and before he lost consciousness, will be discussed later. Mrs. Cox then went downstairs herself, and ordered the butler to send the coachman for Dr. Harrison of Streatham Hill—instead, as one should have expected from one of her capacity, for the nearest doctor.

Meanwhile Mary Ann had wakened Mrs. Bravo, and told her that Mr. Bravo was very ill. Twice crying, "What is the matter?" the wife threw on her dressing-gown and hastened to her husband's assistance. She was horrified to find him lying insensible on the floor by the window: "he was looking like death." The moment she heard that Dr. Harrison had been summoned from Streatham, she said to Mrs. Cox, "Why didn't you send for Dr. Moore?" who lived hard by. Running downstairs, she met the butler as he returned from his message to the lodge. She was crying, he says, and seemed sincerely anxious. She bade him fetch Dr. Moore forthwith, which he did. When Dr. Moore came shortly after ten he found the two ladies with the patient, who had been lifted into a chair; he was totally unconscious, the pulse barely perceptible. "He looked like a person who was under the influence of poison," but what poison, the doctor failed to ascertain. He was put to bed, and Mrs. Bravo asked whether his condition was dangerous; being told to expect the worst, she burst into tears, her grief appearing to Dr. Moore to be perfectly genuine. Some half-hour later Dr. Harrison arrived. He was met at the door by Mrs. Cox, who was more communicative to him than to his confrère; she informed him of the vomiting at the window and of the administration of the mustard emetic, adding: "*I am sure he has taken chloroform.*" After consulting with Dr. Moore, Dr. Harrison saw the patient, who was in a state of collapse and quite insensible; he was given an injection of brandy. In conse-

quence of Mrs. Cox's statement the doctors searched the room; they found three bottles: one of chloroform, another of laudanum, and a third of camphor liniment: these were the only visible drugs.

The physicians were nonplussed; they suggested getting another opinion, to which Mrs. Bravo at once agreed, sending her carriage to bring from Harley Street Mr. Royes Bell, surgeon, a cousin of her husband and his intimate friend. At 2:30 A.M. (Wednesday, 19th April) that gentleman, together with his colleague Dr. (afterwards Sir George) Johnson, Senior Physician of King's College Hospital, reached The Priory; they consulted with the other two doctors and saw the patient, who at 3 A.M. recovered consciousness. They were satisfied that he was dying of a powerful irritant poison. Dr. Johnson asked him what he had taken; he said he had rubbed his gums with laudanum for neuralgia, and might have swallowed some. Dr. Johnson said, "Laudanum won't explain your symptoms"; to which the patient replied, "I have taken nothing else; if it was not laudanum, I don't know what it was." Mr. Bell was then called out of the room by Mrs. Cox, who said she had a communication to make to Dr. Johnson. To him she stated that when she first entered Mr. Bravo's room he said to her, "*I've taken some of that poison, but don't tell Florence.*"\* Dr. Johnson naturally replied, "Did you not ask him what he had taken, when he had taken it, and why he had done so?" She said, "No; he told me nothing more than that."† Dr. Johnson then returned to the bedside. "Mrs. Cox tells us you have spoken to her of taking poison," said he; "what's the meaning of that?" "I don't remember having spoken of taking poison," said Bravo. "Have you taken poison?" asked the doctor; the patient repeated his former statement as to the laudanum.

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\* It was, presumably, to keep the matter secret from his wife that a few seconds earlier he had shouted on the landing, "Florence! Florence!"

† This statement, Dr. Johnson learned later from Drs. Harrison and Moore, had been withheld from them during their four hours' anxious attendance upon a dying man.

Asked whether there were any poisons about the house, he said, "Yes; chloroform, laudanum, and rat poison in the stable." He was perfectly conscious, and the doctor was satisfied that he understood every word that was said to him.

Meantime the symptoms—abdominal pain, vomiting, and purging—continued their distressing course. At 5:30 A.M. Dr. Johnson left, taking with him certain ejected matters, which he tested for *arsenic* with negative results. Mr. Bell remained in charge of the case. Between 11 and 12 on the Wednesday forenoon the dying man, being somewhat easier, asked his wife, Mrs. Cox, and the doctor to pray with him; he said the Lord's Prayer, in which they all joined. He then dictated to Mr. Bell his will, leaving his whole property to his wife and appointing her his sole executrix. Seeing him still restless, Mr. Bell asked whether he had anything on his mind, to which he answered, "No"; adding, "I have not led a religious life." Rowe, the butler, who was devoted to his master and did all he could in the sickroom, gives us the following graphic glimpse of the situation: "Every now and then they [the doctors] asked him what else he had taken, saying that laudanum would not account for his symptoms; but every time, he said he had only taken laudanum. He was asked so often that he seemed to get angry at last, and then he said, 'If I knew what I was suffering from, why the devil should I send for you?'"—which, to me, has about it the ring of truth.

That morning Mrs. Bravo had telegraphed to her father-and mother-in-law who were at St. Leonards, and they arrived in the afternoon, bringing with them Mr. Royes Bell's sister, and old Mrs. Bravo's maid, Amelia Bushell, who had known Charles half his life. They took charge of the sickroom, Florence making no objection; she was, Bushell tells us, pale and weak, and quite unequal to the nursing. Till then she had been constantly in the room, her husband often asking her to kiss him and calling her by a pet name. "What a bother I am to you all, Florrie," said he in the intervals of

his pain; and he begged her to "bury him without fuss." "What have you taken, Charlie, to make you so ill?" she asked; but such was his anguish that he could only call upon his Saviour for mercy.

Next day, Thursday 20th April, the doctors informed the family that the case was hopeless and they could do no more. Mrs. Bravo then said, "You have had your way, you have given him up; now I must have my way as his wife," and she told them she had been advised—by whom, will presently appear—to try a mustard poultice, and small doses of *arsenicum*—a homeopathic drug. Dr. Johnson objected to the poultice on the ground that the patient was already sufficiently tormented, but permitted the *arsenicum*, which, Mrs. Bravo claimed, relieved the sickness. It was obtained from Mrs. Cox's medicine chest. Dr. Johnson next brought down Mr. Henry Smith, surgeon, of King's College Hospital, whose wife was a sister of Mrs. Joseph Bravo and who had known Charles from a boy. He asked the patient no questions and had nothing to suggest as to treatment.

Meanwhile Mrs. Bravo, having lost faith in the five medical experts, regardless of professional etiquette had sent Mrs. Cox to London with a note to the great Sir William Gull—who, with the unqualified assistance of Providence, had five years before saved the life of the Prince of Wales—to come and see if he could help her husband. Mrs. Cox, curiously, told him nothing as to the nature of the illness. Sir William, in the circumstances—he knew Mrs. Bravo's people—was willing to waive ceremony, and accompanied Dr. Johnson to The Priory. They differ, as we shall find, in their accounts of what occurred. "This is not disease," said Sir William, after examining the patient; "you are poisoned; pray tell me how you came by it?" He said he took it himself: laudanum. "You have taken much more than that," said Sir William; and then solemnly adjured him to tell what it was, as it might help them to find an antidote. "Before God," said the dying man, "I took only laudanum." "If you

die without telling us," Dr. Johnson warned him, "someone may be suspected of having poisoned you." "I know that," was the reply, "but I can tell you nothing more." Sir William, having heard of the vomiting from the window, looked out, and saw lying on the leads a portion of the ejected matter—there had been heavy rain overnight, and much of it was washed away. What remained was collected with a spoon and placed in a sealed jar for subsequent analysis. That none of the other doctors had thought of doing this is surprising. After the great physician had left the room the patient insisted on his being recalled. What followed is described by Miss Bell: "The deceased moved himself in the bed and said, 'Sir William, I wish to tell you now that I have told you the truth, and nothing but the whole truth.' Sir William said, 'You must consider the gravity of your situation, and of all that you say and do.' Deceased said, 'I know that; I know I am going to appear before my Maker. I have told them all so [*i. e.*, that he had taken nothing but *laudanum*], and they will not believe me.' . . . Deceased asked them if they could not give him something to relieve his pain, and was there really no hope? Sir William said, 'There is very little life left in you—in fact, you are half-dead now.'" Thereafter the patient gradually sank and died at 5:20 A.M. on Friday 21st April, some fifty-six hours from the onset of the symptoms. His last words were: "Be kind to my darling wife, Mother; she's been the best of wives to me." The old lady's guarded reply was, "I am never unkind to anyone."

As none of the six medical men concerned saw his way to grant a death certificate, an inquest was inevitable, and the Coroner's officer received in the handwriting of Mrs. Cox the following hospitable invitation:

THE PRIORY, BALHAM, April 23. [1876.]

*Mrs. Charles Bravo writes to say that she wishes the inquest to be held at The Priory, where she will have refreshments prepared for the jury.*

The inquest, held on 25th April in the dead man's dining-room, had quite the air of a family party. The Coroner was an old friend, and it seems to have been understood that Mr. Bravo's regrettable suicide, so painful to the survivors, should be disposed of with the minimum of scandal. The proceedings were private and no reporters were present. Mr. Joseph Bravo having given formal evidence of the death, Mrs. Cox described the onset of the illness. She had told Dr. Harrison when he came what the deceased said to her about having taken poison. Mr. Bravo did not explain why he took the poison. He was on affectionate terms with his wife and had no reason for committing suicide. She could give no opinion as to why he should do so. Amelia Bushell and Mary Ann Keeber described the course of the illness so far as they knew it; Dr. Harrison and Mr. Bell recounted the symptoms, which were those of an acrid poison, and told how the deceased, though repeatedly questioned, denied having taken anything but laudanum. Dr. Payne, who conducted the post-mortem, said he saw no sign of natural disease to account for death. He removed certain organs for further examination. Professor Redwood stated that he had analysed the several matters submitted to him and found antimony in the vomited matter, in the excreta, and in the intestines. It had been taken in the form of tartar emetic, which was readily soluble in water and practically tasteless. Mr. M'Calmont, the barrister friend whom the deceased on the day of his seizure had invited to dinner, said that Mr. Bravo was then in the best of health and spirits, and was in his judgment a most unlikely man to commit suicide. Here the Coroner closed the inquiry. He refused to hear Drs. Moore and Johnson, who were present and wished to testify, and he declined to call Mrs. Bravo. He summed up, on the evidence of Mrs. Cox, for *felo de se*; but the jury returned as their verdict "that the deceased died from the effects of poison—antimony—but we have not sufficient evidence under what circumstances it came into his body." So Charles



Bravo was laid to rest in Norwood Cemetery; and his widow, with her devoted confidante, retired to Brighton for a season. Their *villégiature* was to suffer a rude interruption.

### III

When the facts of the case became public property there was deep and widespread dissatisfaction with the result of the inquest, and an agitation for a fresh inquiry began in the Press. The *Lancet* published a medical history of the case by Dr. Johnson, together with Dr. Payne's report of the post-mortem and Professor Redwood's of the analysis. On 16th May Mrs. Bravo, through her solicitor, offered a reward of £500 to anyone who should prove the purchase of the antimony that killed her husband. On the 17th the Coroner's jury met to consider the situation. Certain singular features in the evidence of Mrs. Cox were commented upon, as also was the inadequacy of the information laid before them. "A jury less determined to do their duty," said the Foreman, who presided, "might have been induced to return a verdict of suicide or of death by misadventure." To the ladies at Brighton the news, from the peculiarity of their position, was disappointing. Mrs. Bravo wrote to her father-in-law that a letter she had received from Mr. Royes Bell "fully confirms my suspicions as to poor Charlie's committing suicide. . . . We have Sir William Gull's evidence, and I shall not allow the living to be under any imputation such as is cast upon them by such a wicked verdict." But the matter was to be taken out of her hands.

On 18th May the question was raised by Serjeant (afterwards Sir John) Simon in the House of Commons, and the Home Secretary (Mr., later Lord, Cross) replied that he was ready to do all in his power to elucidate the mystery of Mr. Bravo's death. Mr. Stevenson, Solicitor to the Treasury, thereupon held a private inquiry at which some thirty witnesses were examined, but neither Mrs. Bravo nor Mrs. Cox was invited to attend. The significance of this omission

was not lost upon the legal advisers of those ladies, who, after consultation with their respective solicitors, tendered their evidence to the Treasury. This was permitted, on the understanding that their Statements were entirely voluntary and that they would not be questioned thereon. What these Statements were we shall hear when we come to the evidence; meanwhile it is sufficient to note that a new and startling element was imported into the case by Mrs. Cox. That lady now averred that when examined at the first inquest, from a mistaken idea of shielding Mrs. Bravo's reputation, she did not tell "the full particulars," which she was anxious to do. What Mr. Bravo had really said to her on the fatal night was this: "*Mrs. Cox, I have taken poison for Gully. Don't tell Florence.*" Who "Gully" was, and what cause Charles Bravo had for jealousy of him as alleged by both ladies, we shall see in the sequel.

On 19th June the Attorney-General (Sir John Holker) made application to the Court of Queen's Bench for a rule to quash the Coroner's inquisition and to grant a fresh inquiry—the grounds being the exclusion of Dr. Johnson's evidence (whose affidavit was read to the Court, in which he expressed his "decided belief" that Mr. Bravo did not knowingly take poison), and the new matter introduced by Mrs. Cox in her Statement to the Treasury:

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE [Cockburn]: *There is no use in shutting our eyes to the fact that in your view it is not a case of suicide.*

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: *If it turned out to be a murder, as I suspect it was, I hope we should be able to elicit facts which would justify a charge against someone.*

The Court quashed the inquisition and ordered the Coroner to hold a new inquiry.

We may take advantage of this interval between the acts to identify the skeleton thus evoked by Mrs. Cox from the cupboard of her friend and benefactress. Dr. James Manby Gully, who graduated at Edinburgh in 1829, and so may

have attended Dr. Knox's lectures and witnessed the execution of the murderer Burke, was sixty-eight years of age when Mr. Bravo died, having been born in 1808 in Jamaica.\* After successfully practising hydropathy at Malvern for thirty summers, he retired in 1872. Some two years previously he had professionally attended Captain Ricardo's young wife, whom he had known since she was twelve, and an "attachment" was then formed between the elderly physician and his fair patient which was to prove equally fatal to both, and of which there will be more to say. "The aged if vigorous medico," as he was picturesquely termed in the Press, had throughout his career exercised upon the opposite sex a powerful attraction. Even Mrs. Cox, that demure matron, confessed to finding him "a fascinating man, one who would be likely to interest women very much"; and Mrs. Bravo frankly said of him, "No one could grow tired of his society, he is so intellectual." This fine spirit, housed in a short stout tabernacle of flesh, triumphed over its unromantic casing to the beguilement of its female worshippers: the doctor, a fat little man with a charming manner, had a way with the women.

The second inquest, which opened on 11th July in the Bedford Hotel, hard by Balham Station, was a much more formidable affair than the homely inquiry at The Priory. The Coroner sat with a legal assessor; the Treasury was represented by Her Majesty's Attorney-General, with Mr. (later Sir John) Gorst, and Mr. (now Sir Harry) Poland; Mrs. Bravo, by Sir Henry James (afterwards Lord James of Hereford) and Mr. Biron; Mrs. Cox, by Mr. Murphy; and the Bravo family, by Mr. (later Sir George) Lewis, of the famous firm in Ely Place. At a subsequent stage Mr. Serjeant Parry and Mr. (afterwards Justice) A. L. Smith appeared for Dr. Gully. So strong was the public interest in the proceedings

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\* It is a curious coincidence that Jamaica was the theatre of the elder Mr. Bravo's fortune, of Mrs. Cox's matrimonial adventures, and of Dr. Gully's birth.

that these were reported with a fullness, and attended by an audience, much greater than usual in such inquiries, while the presence of the chief law officer of the Crown, a bevy of Queen's Counsel, and London's smartest solicitor was, in the circumstances, unique. The business was to occupy twenty-three working days and was to cost the parties fifteen thousand pounds; what it cost the community, goodness (and the Treasury) only knows. Yet for all this expenditure of time and money no one benefited excepting the purveyors and consumers of scandalous revelations, against which doubtful profit must be set the abasement of Mrs. Bravo, the disgrace of Dr. Gully, the involuntary exile of Mrs. Cox to Jamaica, and the demonstrated insolubility of the Balham Mystery.

Now, by reason of the conflicting interests involved, the noble army of lawyers engaged, the introduction of so many side issues, and the admission of so much irrelevant matter, due to the extrajudicial character of the inquiry, a consideration of the evidence is beset with difficulties unknown to the student of regular criminal trials. The witnesses, put up apparently at random, had to sustain as best they might the cross-fire of half a dozen counsel, as greatly to their own confusion as to that of the result. We lack, moreover, the aid of addresses to the jury, presenting and commenting on the nature and value of the evidence from the standpoint of the respective parties; while the Coroner's summing up, in view of the extent and complexity of the proof, forms but an indifferent substitute for the expert charge of a trained judge. Hence the reader of the evidence as reported, groping his way through a jungle of facts and circumstances more or less relevant to the issue, instead of pursuing the beaten track of ordered judicial procedure, may well exclaim with Webster's immortal Duchess:

Wish me good speed,  
For I am going into a wilderness  
Where I shall find nor path nor friendly clewe  
To be my guide.

Such a monitor, so far as my ability and space permit, it has been my humble purpose to supply. If, courteously, you have followed me so far, you will know the salient features of the case, so that it only remains for me to deal with such points as seem to throw light upon the radical question: How came Charles Bravo to swallow the poison by which his death was caused? This, the sole object of the investigation, was largely lost sight of in exhaustive attempts to find in the three persons suspected—Mrs. Bravo, Mrs. Cox, and Dr. Gully—some *motive* for perpetrating the crime. The matter imported into the case by Mrs. Cox in her memorable disclosure to the Treasury was, in a sense very different from her intention, generally accepted as furnishing the key to the mystery, and popular opinion at the time succinctly expressed itself in the following parody of certain familiar lines:

When lovely woman stoops to folly  
And finds her husband in the way,  
What charm can soothe her melancholy,  
What art can turn him into clay?

The only means her aims to cover  
And save herself from prison locks,  
And repossess her ancient lover,  
Are Burgundy and Mrs. Cox.\*

Whether or not this view of the case is warranted by the facts it is now our business to consider.

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\* For this gem I am indebted to the research of Sir John Hall. Other bloody verses known to me include the tribute to the Gill's Hill crime of 1823, which so intrigued Sir Walter Scott:

They cut his throat from ear to ear,  
His brains they battered in;  
His name was Mr. William Weare,  
He dwelt in Lyon's Inn.

The West Port murders of 1828 are thus poetically enshrined:

Up the close and down the stair,  
But and ben wi' Burke and Hare.  
Burke's the butcher, Hare's the thief,  
Knox the boy that buys the beef.

## IV

Mrs. Cox, in her Statement to the Treasury of 2nd June, said that when she received Mr. Bravo's confession of suicide "for Gully" she remarked, "How could you do such a thing?" but he only screamed for hot water. Before that came, he was sick out of the window. She then smelt chloroform and rushed to the bottle, which she found nearly empty.\* She did not tell Dr. Moore, as it would have caused "such a scandal," though she did tell Dr. Harrison: if Mr. Bravo had recovered he would have been "so angry" at her telling.† Mrs. Bravo had had no communication with Dr. Gully since her marriage. She (Cox) "conscientiously believed" their friendship, though very imprudent, to be entirely innocent. On Good Friday (14th April) Mrs. Bravo came downstairs for the first time since her illness. Mr. Bravo objected to her lying on the sofa to rest, saying she was a selfish pig; he further said that he would no longer live with her, was going away, and wished she were dead. He often said he hated Gully and wished *he* were dead. "Let her go back to Gully!" said he, when Mrs. Cox expostulated with him on his unreason. On another occasion he rushed out of the house and was with difficulty persuaded by her to return. She always made peace between husband and wife. Before his death he asked her, "Why did you tell them? Does Florence know I have poisoned myself? Don't tell

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Finally, the case of Miss Lizzie Borden in 1893, America's super-murder trial, is embalmed in a quatrain which was a favourite of President Roosevelt:

Lizzie Borden took an axe  
And gave her Mother forty whacks;  
When she saw what she had done,  
She gave her Father forty-one!

The admirable brevity of the bard is beyond praise; volumes might have contained less matter. Would that he had my present job—or I, his gift!

\* Both Dr. Moore and Dr. Harrison state that there was no smell of chloroform.

† Dr. Harrison states that on his first examination of the patient he told Mrs. Cox that he (Bravo) "would not live for an hour"; and further, that she never mentioned poison to him.

her." He was jealous of Gully, "though he knew everything before marriage."

Mrs. Bravo, in her Statement of the same date—they were plainly acting in concert—corroborated Mrs. Cox as to Mr. Bravo's retrospective jealousy of Dr. Gully. Another cause of dissension was that before their marriage he (Bravo) had kept a woman at Maidenhead, to whom he still paid money and for whom he had borrowed £500. He was very passionate, and once actually struck her (his wife). His meanness was such that he required her to put down her own maid, and wished her to give up the cobs and *to turn away Mrs. Cox*, whereby he anticipated a saving of £400 a year. During one of their quarrels he jumped out of bed and threatened to cut his throat. Her "attachment" to Dr. Gully began at Malvern in 1870. When she went to Streatham he took a house opposite hers, and on her removal to Balham he came to live within five minutes' walk of The Priory. She informed Mr. Bravo before marriage of her intimacy with the doctor. This "attachment" was quite innocent, and nothing improper had ever passed between them. It was agreed that the matter should never be mentioned; yet after the marriage, though she had neither seen nor heard from Dr. Gully since, Mr. Bravo spoke of him "morning, noon, and night," abusing him and calling him "that wretch." They quarrelled about him on the drive to town on the morning of the seizure, and Mr. Bravo said, "You will see what I will do when I get home!" Nothing was said to her about poison till Sir William Gull came. Mr. Bravo did not tell her that he had taken poison; he made no inquiry as to the cause of his illness.

To the picture here painted of the dead man's inveterate, if groundless, jealousy of his wife's former friend, designed by the ladies to supply a motive for his taking his own life, there was a reverse side which they had overlooked. A husband so base as thus to abuse his wife, and so mean as to compass the casting out of her faithful companion, might

be deemed to have invited reprisals. Both ladies had, since the first inquest, received anonymous letters, denouncing them as jointly and severally responsible for his taking off, and good Mrs. Cox was even by one optimistic correspondent presented with a portrait of herself suspended from a gibbet! It was, therefore, essential to their convenience and safety that they should suggest some other explanation of the tragedy. Let us see what support is afforded to their story by the evidence of impartial witnesses.

It appears from the unanimous testimony of relatives, friends, and servants that Charles Bravo was a strong, active fellow, in perfect health, of a lively and cheerful disposition, famed for his high spirits, and full of fun: the last man, as all agree, to commit the cowardly crime of suicide. Similarly, his relations with his wife seemed happy and affectionate: no one (except Mrs. Cox) ever saw the slightest cloud between them, none of the servants ever heard him mention Dr. Gully's name. In particular, coachman and groom heard nothing of the alleged quarrel in the open carriage on the last drive to town. Further, Bravo's demeanour to his wife during the long-drawn agony of the death chamber—when all vain pretences must be laid aside—was that of a loving, considerate, and confiding spouse. Of course, many an imperfectly matched pair may present to the world an harmonious front; yet I defy a couple, living on the footing here described of violent opposition and mutual distrust, not to afford their intimates an involuntary glimpse of the cat in the marital bag, nor wholly to stifle the cries of that indignant captive. But to the Gully-Ricardo motif I shall in due course revert.

With reference to the suicide theory, Mr. Bravo senior explained that the Maidenhead incident was amicably closed, that the deceased had £1100 at his credit, "and had only to ask for more." His barrister friends proved him to have had some knowledge of medicine and to be well read in medical jurisprudence; one, Mr. Atkinson, deposed: "He



was a very clear-headed man, with a great deal of common sense and very little sentiment, and no feeling for any woman would make him take a painful and uncertain poison, with the effect of which he was thoroughly acquainted"—“a dreadful death,” as one of the doctors described it. And indeed if Charles Bravo did take antimony with suicidal intent, it is admitted that he established a record which no one has ever attempted to break.

As to the vehicle of the poison, the same gentleman, from his intimate association with the deceased, supplies a valuable clue. He and Bravo had shared rooms together at Oxford in 1866-68, and also chambers in the Temple for three years. It was Bravo's invariable custom to take before going to bed a deep draught of cold water from the bedroom water-bottle, without using a tumbler. He had noticed the same habit later, when staying with Mr. Bravo's people, and also on a recent visit to Paris in his company. Keeping an eye on the water-bottle, we find that it was filled nightly by the housemaid (Keeber), and was always used; particularly that she filled it on the night in question, after dinner. The doctors saw in the bedroom no vessel from which poison had apparently been taken. In view of the amount absorbed—thirty or forty grains, according to Professor Redwood's estimate—the bottle must have contained at least ninety grains. The popular attribution of the poison to the Burgundy at dinner is for two reasons improbable: the wine would have become turbid, and the butler says that his master was something of a connoisseur, with a critical palate: the experts state that the poison would act in fifteen minutes, in which case Mr. Bravo would have been sick at table.\* Forty grains of tartarised antimony in four ounces of water were exhibited by the Professor to the jury: the mixture could be held in the mouth without taste or feeling. Thus the probabilities all point to the water-bottle as the

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\* As to what became of the residue of this Burgundy there is no evidence.

medium. But Dr. Harrison remembered that at midnight on the Tuesday he drank in the bedroom nearly a tumblerful from a water-bottle, *which was three parts full*; and Dr. Moore recalled that he had used some earlier to cool the hot brandy-and-water injection. Neither could identify the bottle produced, which was of a common type, nor say that the butler did not bring up fresh cold water with the tray.\*

To the general accord as to 'Mr. Bravo's previous good health there is one noteworthy exception. A month before his death, as the butler puts it—early in March, according to his step-father—Mr. Bravo was sick after breakfast and asked the butler for brandy. Between nine and ten o'clock he called at Palace Green, and there complained of being sick. He told his step-father that on coming up the lane from his house to Balham Station, he had vomited so much that he was afraid people would think he had been drunk the night before. He looked very ill, was given some curaçao, and, feeling better, went his way to Westminster. It is a remarkable coincidence—though it may be no more—that at this very time the vexed question of Mrs. Cox's departure became acute. To herself, to his wife, to his mother-in-law, and to divers friends Mr. Bravo had announced his intention to dispense with her further services. Her salary, travelling expenses, dress, and board cost him, he considered, £300 or £400 a year: "he might keep another pair of horses for that." Mr. Bravo was a self-willed man, one who would carry out his purpose despite all opposition, *unless he were rendered incapable of action*. On 11th April a letter came from Mrs. Cox's aunt in Jamaica, who had opportunely taken

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\* Why the butler (Rowe) was not recalled to speak to this does not appear. If there were but one bottle, and if Mr. Bravo had taken his usual "deep draught" and Dr. Moore had used some, how came it to be *three-quarters full* when Dr. Harrison assuaged his thirst? Nay, more; Mrs. Cox, before they came, took half a tumblerful for camphor drops for the sufferer! Either there were *two* bottles, or, more probably, the bottle was emptied and refilled—by whom can only be conjectured—*before the arrival of the doctors*.

ill, begging her niece to come out to her forthwith. This seemed to solve the difficulty; but that lady said it would be "inconvenient" for her to go; and although Mr. Joseph Bravo expressed a strong opinion that she should at once do so, and "urged in every way the propriety of her going," she steadfastly refused to vacate her post.

The only proof of the presence of antimony on the premises rests upon the evidence of George Griffith and his wife. This man had been eight years with Dr. Gully as coachman, and from May, 1875, to January, 1876, was in service with Mrs. Ricardo, being dismissed before her second marriage for careless driving. His wife had been her own maid, and they occupied one of the lodges at The Priory. He stated that he was in the habit of using for his horses a lotion of antimony which he made up himself, as prescribed in *The Pocket Farrier*; that he kept it in a pint bottle, labelled "Poison," in an open cupboard in the stables; that he poured out what remained of it when he left; and that he had bought the antimony at Robertson's and Smith's, respectively chemists at Streatham and Balham. He produced his expense book, showing two entries in July and August, 1875, of 1s. 6d. and 3d. for "horse medicine," which he said referred to those purchases. Mr. Robertson deposed that he found no such entries in his poison register, but admitted that certain leaves were missing and that there was an anonymous entry of two drachms of tartar emetic, sold "to be administered to horses." Mr. Smith and his assistant denied ever selling to Griffith any tartar emetic. Mrs. Griffith deposed that her husband had an ounce of antimony in a box in a drawer, which she put in the fire as she wanted the box. She remembered him saying later that he was "going to fetch some poison" from Smith's, to make a lotion for his horses. It appears that Griffith resented his dismissal, and remarked of his mistress's new husband: "Poor fellow, I wouldn't like to be in his shoes; he won't live four months!"

—a strange prediction.\* My own idea is that the fatal dose—so “greatly diluted”—came from this lotion in the bottle in the stable cupboard, from which, before it was emptied by Griffith, some politic person, attracted by the label, had taken a sample as a provision against contingencies. One never knows when one may find a use for a thing.

## V

The two ladies and the doctor divided between them the honours of the inquiry. Mrs. Cox, moral considerations apart, was a bad witness. She answered in a low voice, after long pauses, and persistently fenced with awkward questions. When such were pressed, we read, “the witness sat for some time in the midst of the silent court, but made no reply; she sat quietly brushing the tablecloth with her gloved hand, and did not look up.” She kept her head throughout, however, and was more than a match for her learned adversaries. Mrs. Bravo, on the other hand, gave her evidence generally “in a calm and composed manner, and in a firm and distinct voice”; but she made to the Coroner an hysterical appeal for protection from the ruthless catechism of Mr. Lewis regarding her former connection with Dr. Gully. That old gentleman produced a very favourable impression. His evidence, entirely voluntary, was given with much frankness and with a due sense of the painful position in which he stood—or rather sat: for to the indignation of the audience, having just recovered from illness, he was allowed, like the female witnesses, a seat. While admitting that Mrs. Bravo’s account of their intimacy was “too true, too true,” he solemnly swore that he had nothing to do, directly or indirectly, with Charles Bravo’s death.

The history of the *liaison* between Dr. Gully and Mrs.

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\* It was proved that in July, 1869, Griffith bought two ounces of tartar emetic from a Malvern chemist, whose books described the purchase as “for Dr. Gully.” The doctor emphatically denied all knowledge of this transaction but to the public it gave the case, in Mr. Sapsea’s phrase, “a dark look,” though in fact it had nothing to do with it.

Ricardo, as it was forced from these ladies throughout long days of mordant cross-examination—from Mrs. Cox, not without much prevarication and resistance; from Florence Bravo, not without tears and shame—was, briefly, this. In 1872, the year after her husband's death, Mrs. Ricardo formed two connections which were equally to affect her fate: she accepted Mrs. Cox as her companion and Dr. Gully as her lover.

The pair became inseparable. Dr. Gully, who had retired from practice, was constantly in attendance, devoting his whole time to his attractive neighbour; he took a house near her at Streatham and afterwards at Balham he was allowed the privilege of a latch-key; he accompanied Mrs. Ricardo to divers English watering-places, he went on tour with her to Italy and to Germany; yet in all this Mrs. Cox saw nothing beyond "gentlemanly familiarity" on his part, and refused to acknowledge that they were lovers. Finally, she was brought to admit that she had seen him kiss her, that the attachment "was the subject of much conversation locally," and that Mrs. Ricardo's family had cast her off because of her infatuation for her assiduous ally. Having gone so far, Mrs. Cox admitted that had there been no Mrs. Gully, "it might have been a match"; and vouchsafed the damaging fact that the couple had arranged to marry so soon as the doctor's wife was dead. As that venerable lady was over ninety, it seemed unlikely to be a long engagement. The result went to show that Mrs. Cox had lied heartily upon this matter, both at the first inquest and in her Statement to the Treasury.

Poor Florence Bravo, who followed her companion in the witness-chair, had, in view of her friend's revelations, a bad time. The spectacle of her martyrdom is not improving, and I do not propose to dwell on it. Suffice it to say that she fought bravely to retain some small rag of reputation and to minimise the extent and character of her fall; but in the end she had to confess that, from the death of her first husband, she had been Dr. Gully's mistress. Ten days after

meeting Charles Bravo at Brighton Mrs. Ricardo wrote to "her ancient lover," breaking with him for good and all, giving as her reason the desire to become reconciled to her people. Ten days before the wedding she and Dr. Gully met for the last time. The doctor took his dismissal in good part; "his sole wish was for her happiness"; and it was not unreasonable that at this time of life he should have been willing to retire. They returned to one another their mutual gifts, and so far as the principals were concerned the chapter was finally closed. But Mrs. Cox, as we shall see, showed an unaccountable disposition to turn over the old leaves. Before she accepted Mr. Bravo's proposal Mrs. Ricardo told him "everything" as to her past relations with Dr. Gully. Bravo seems to have taken the disclosure calmly; he described her candour as noble, and conferred with Mrs. Cox as to the probability of a woman who had once gone wrong "going wrong again," which that experienced matron thought unlikely. He was not, as appears, a sentimental man. A hitch occurring in the ante-nuptial negotiations regarding the lady's proposal to include in the marriage settlement upon herself the furniture, carriages, etc., at The Priory, the prospective bridegroom was exceeding wroth, saying he would rather break off the marriage than not sit on his own chairs. In this dilemma Florence took counsel with her old adviser; they had a brief interview at the lodge, when Dr. Gully told her to agree. "So, in fact, it was Dr. Gully who made the match at last?" was Mr. Gorst's sarcastic comment; but indeed this was nearer the truth than he imagined. Thenceforth they saw each other no more—until the inquest.

Whoever made the match, and whether it was made in Heaven or elsewhere, it was clearly not Mrs. Cox, for though aware of old Mrs. Bravo's disapproval, she urged Charles to communicate to his mother his fiancée's confession, which he refused to do, as it would mean breaking off the marriage. In January, 1876, Mr. Bravo received an anon-

ymous letter, charging him with having married Dr. Gully's mistress for money. He was vastly annoyed, says Mrs. Cox, to whom he showed it, and wanted to shoot the doctor, believing him to be its author; but Mrs. Cox, whatever may have been her source of knowledge, was able to assure him that it was not written by that gentleman. In view of the delicate position of the parties, it is not a little surprising to find Mrs. Cox keeping in touch with Dr. Gully, from the honeymoon until the death. The doctor plainly desired to have no dealings with his former friends, and had instructed his butler not to admit the ladies should they call. Yet on no less than five occasions Mrs. Cox contrived to waylay him upon various pretexts. She spoke to him in the street, at Victoria, at Balham Station, whenever and wherever she got the chance, now asking him to prescribe for Jamaica fever, as she "would probably soon be going" to expose herself to its attack; now for a "treatment" for contingent ague. After the miscarriage in April, she required of him a sleeping draught for Mrs. Bravo, which he agreed to supply, ordering half an ounce of laurel water—*cerasee* is the homeopathic term—and leaving it at Mrs. Cox's house in London, as he wished to have no communication with The Priory, which he regarded as, for him, "forbidden ground." \* When, the day before the death, the doctor gave up the case as hopeless, Mrs. Bravo bethought her of her old friend, whom she esteemed "the cleverest medical man in the whole world," and sent Mrs. Cox to ask if he could help her husband. Pritchard, the butler, opened the door. "Is the Doctor in? Poor Mr. Bravo is dying," said Mrs. Cox. Pritchard announced the unwelcome visitor. "You shouldn't have let her in," said his master; "I suppose I must see her." † The butler

\* The phial, unopened, was after the death thrown away by Mrs. Cox at Mrs. Bravo's request, for fear it should be deemed "poison." It had no connection with the case; but the incident was an unfortunate one for Dr. Gully, as inviting suspicion.

† He prescribed the *arsenicum* and mustard poultice already mentioned.

adds feelingly, on his own account: "I should not have been sorry if I had never seen her"—a sentiment in which surely he was not alone.

To certain curiosities of conduct on the part of Mrs. Cox in connection with her host's illness I have before referred; another example, which to me seems not less significant than remarkable, I must find space for. Upon her administration of the mustard, Mr. Bravo was again sick—the first time, you remember, was out of the window, whereby most of the result was lost. On the second occasion he used, copiously, the bedroom hand-basin. Now, Mrs. Cox was plainly a lady who kept her head in a sickroom; she had, as she avers, just learned from himself that he had taken poison; she had, very properly, exhibited an emetic; she was about to summon medical aid—though not the nearest; and she must, in the circumstances, have been aware how vital it was that the vomited matter should be preserved for the doctor's inspection. Yet what says Mary Ann Keeber?

*I held the basin for him. It had not been used before—not for sickness that night. The vomit in the basin looked like food, and was red. Mrs. Cox told me to take the vomit away, and I threw it down the sink in the housemaid's room, and washed the basin out.*

"I told Mary Ann to empty the basin and bring it back," says Mrs. Cox, "in case it should be wanted again." Cross-examined upon this by the Attorney-General, she gave the following explanation:

*He had had the mustard and water before he was sick in the basin. It might have been ten minutes after that he was sick in the basin, for the mustard had to be mixed. When he made that statement I thought he had poisoned himself. I did not think he was in a precarious way, because, as he was sick, I smelt, I thought, chloroform, and I saw the bottle was empty. I never thought he had taken anything else but chloroform. I gave Keeber instructions to take away the vomit. I gave the emetic to get off his stomach any deleterious matter that might be upon it. I did not save the vomit, so that he might have a*



*clean basin. It did not strike me that as he had told me he had taken poison it would be well for the medical men to see the vomit. There were other basins and receptacles in the room, but I never thought of them. Mr. Bravo had told me he had taken poison, but it did not occur to me that it was important to save the vomit. I had no object in sending the basin away. Why should I send it away? What object could I have?*

Echo answers, "Why?" But the fact that she did so send it, and thus destroyed most valuable evidence, remains. Again, Mrs. Cox thrice specifically states that Mr. Bravo made to her the famous admission *so soon as she entered his room and before he vomited from the window*, and that he *then* screamed for hot water. Mary Ann states: "I went with Mrs. Cox to Mr. Bravo's room, and there I saw him standing by the window vomiting, and he called again for hot water." But she heard nothing of the alleged confession, though present at the moment when it is said to have been made.

Let us recall the text to Mrs. Cox's progressive revelations, which show her to have been, as regards the development of truth, a disciple of Dr. Newman. To Dr. Harrison she said: "I am sure he has taken chloroform"; to Dr. Johnson she reported the words: "I've taken some of *that* poison, but don't tell Florence"; at the first inquest: "He said, as soon as I went to him, he had taken poison"; to the Treasury: "Mrs. Cox, I have taken poison *for Gully*. Don't tell Florence"; at the second inquest: "Mrs. Cox, I've taken poison *for Dr. Gully*. Don't tell Florence." Against which must be set the solemn oath of the dying man: "Before my God, I have taken nothing but laudanum."

I have only space to note one other point: What were the real relations of the couple during their brief four months of marriage? Upon this matter Mrs. Bravo spake with two voices. To Miss Bell, the day before the death, she remarked: "We have been very, very happy, and Charles has said he has never been so happy in all his life. *We have never had a word together*"—which hardly rhymes with the

perpetual quarrels about "that wretch Gully," with his violence, his threats of suicide, and his desire for a separation. In this connection, Mr. Lewis put to her certain letters of the dead man to his wife, written when she was staying with her people or he with his, the last three within a fortnight of his death, in which occur the following phrases:

*I hold you to be the best of wives. . . . I wish I could sleep away my life till you return. . . . I miss you, my darling wife, dreadfully. When you once come back I will so take care of you that you will never leave me again. . . . I have been thinking all this morning of the sweet old girl I left behind me. . . . You shall find me the best of husbands. . . . I cannot be happy in the absence of the best of wives. My only object in life is to make your life happy to you, and I hope I have succeeded. . . . I do not believe that any love can be greater than mine. . . . My darling Florence, without you I am lost. . . . Two of the happiest people in the world will meet to-morrow. . . .*

"After hearing these letters read," asked Mr. Lewis, "do you mean to tell the jury that your late husband was always—'morning, noon, and night'—speaking in disparaging terms of Dr. Gully?" "I do," replied the witness; "I told others than Mrs. Cox in his lifetime; I told my mother at Buscot." Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Bravo's mother, corroborates this: "She [Florence] said that he often upbraided her about Dr. Gully, and was very passionate—like a spoilt child." Her daughter told her this in January. At the same time Mrs. Bravo was writing to her mother-in-law: "Charlie and I are as happy as can be, and *never have an unkind word*." Which and what is one to believe? A distinguished (married) lady novelist of my acquaintance, whom in my ignorance of feminine psychology I ventured upon this point to consult, assures me that no reliance can be placed on these passages as representing the true relations of the wedded pair: the glowing Agapemone of the letters may have been a factual bear garden. Well, perhaps so, as regards the letters to third

parties whom it was deemed desirable to blind; but fancy can suggest no reason why a husband should employ this amorous camouflage in private letters to a wife with whom he was on the terms described by Mrs. Cox and endorsed by Mrs. Bravo.

As a last instance of these discrepancies I quote a letter from Charles Bravo to his mother, written on Good Friday, seven days before his death—the very day, you may remember, the last “serious quarrel” is said to have arisen between the spouses. He was “very angry” with his wife for resting (on her first day downstairs after her illness!), called her “a selfish pig,” said he despised himself for having married her, wished she were dead, was quite determined to go away, and had made up his mind he would no longer live with her: “let her go back to Gully!” Thus the ladies; let us now hear Mr. Bravo:

THE PRIORY, BALHAM, Good Friday.

MY DEAR OLD GRANNY,—I am sure I am very sorry if I have been negligent in writing. I thought I had written two or three times a week to you or the governor since you left town. However, you shall hear from me more often for the future. We are suffering from horrible weather. My farming operations are at a standstill. My fowls lay as if they were Turks and their eggs the money due on coupons, and my spirits are nothing like what they would be if the sun was visible. Florence is better, but very cross. I went to the library and brought her six volumes of books; three she had read, and three contain the uninspired preachings of an idiot. She has finished a pair of slippers for me in a rage, and is now slanging me for not being able to tell a good book, as you tell good music, by the look. . . . I have bought a splendid lawn tennis [sic]. I intend to play with you and Father Joseph. I rode both the cobs the day before yesterday, and I feel very much as if the muscles of my legs were ossifying. I have difficulty in dragging my shooting boots, which I am obliged, par ordre supérieure, to wear, in addition to a red flannel garment, which is a cross between a kilt, a sporran, and a pair of bathing drawers, and has as many strings as a harp. Nothing but great firmness on the part of my better half,

*and an assurance that it "became me," made me put it on. I feel as if I had stays on my stomach.—I am always, dear Granny, your loving son,*

CHARLES

"Look here, upon this picture, and on this."

In the obscure politics of The Priory one thing is clear: Jane Cannon Cox was a Jacobite—James Gully, not Charles Bravo, claimed her allegiance. Though she had survived the Revolution and retained her office, her heart was with the old régime. Such loyalty as she owed the reigning house would hardly survive her dismissal. Did she do her best to bring about a Restoration? If we accept the evidence of Mrs. Campbell, there must have been some foundation for the tale of Mr. Bravo's retrospective jealousy. It is probable that the resourceful widow saw in this, if suitably magnified and embellished, the means of extricating herself from rather a tight corner. There can be no question which of the two ladies in this drama played "lead." Mrs. Bravo stood in real peril; and being persuaded, as I believe she was, of her husband's suicide, would readily be induced to back her strong-willed confidante in their common danger. If Truth suffered some abrasions in the process, it was done in self-defence. Her faith in her friend must have received a rude shock when she heard that lady's revelations at the inquest. "Now, Mrs. Bravo, do you not feel towards Mrs. Cox the same kindly regard you have always felt?" was Mr. Murphy's last question. "I think she might have spared me many of these painful inquiries to which I have been subjected," was Mrs. Bravo's reply.

The jury, having considered the conundrum propounded for their solution, tendered the following answer:

*We find that Mr. Charles Delaunay Turner Bravo did not commit suicide; that he did not meet his death by misadventure; that he was wilfully murdered by the administration of tartar emetic; but there is not sufficient evidence to fix the guilt upon any person or persons.*

It will be seen that the jury avoided the usual formula: "by some person or persons *unknown*"—a distinction with a difference.

Florence Bravo is said to have died, heartbroken, within the year. On the facts, in the phrase of her discreet companion, but with more sincerity, I "conscientiously believe" her entitled to share the exculpatory epitaph pronounced on the daughter of Leonato. Ruin—professional, social, and complete—came upon "her ancient lover" by reason of his unhappy connection with the case, although Sir Harry Poland has placed upon record his conviction that Dr. Gully knew nothing about the murder. Mrs. Cox—realising the aspiration so beautifully expressed by Lady Emily Hornblower in the touching lines:

Lead us to some sunny isle,  
Yonder in the western deep;  
Where the skies for ever smile,  
And the blacks for ever weep—

was by force of circumstances compelled after all to go back to Jamaica, whence her late husband had before departed for a better world, not, it has been whispered, without certain suspicions as to the expediting of his journey. The reluctance of his relict to revisit a scene of such painful association need not surprise us. Some day perhaps, in one of those impracticable writing-desks of the period, built like a small sarcophagus of massive rosewood, lustrously inlaid with mother-of-pearl, will there be found among the papers of that ambiguous widow, written in a ladylike angular hand, the true version of the Bravo tragedy? I wonder.

# *The Wolves of the West Port*

## A TALE OF TERROR

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W I L L I A M   R O U G H E A D

The friendless bodies of unburied men.

*The White Devil*, ACT V. sc. 4.

**H**AUNTED Edinburgh! Yes; though shorn of her former dignity, bereft of her old-time charm; compassed about by bungalows, her stately mansions disembowelled to furnish flatlets for the New Poor; her venerable Castle converted into an illuminated advertisement; her ancient Palace lost amid competing picture palaces; the Royal Mile, desecrated and defaced, reverberant with the thunder of motor buses; Princes Street bedizened like unto Sauchiehall Street—still, despite these manifold and startling “improvements,” a city of ghosts.

Queen of the ghosts by right royal is the fair phantom of Mary Stuart. I see her coming down the dark wynd through the February night beneath the flaming torches of the guard, on her way to the marriage masque at Holyrood; while up the neighboring close go my Lord Bothwell and his evil crew upon their bloody errand to Kirk o’ Field. I behold her incredible offspring, King James the Just, of pious memory, fleeing, breeches in hand, down the palace stairs in fear of a lesser, but to him more formidable Bothwell. Then in the great gallery, where the candles blaze and the bagpipes blare and all the beauty of Edinburgh bows in homage to her Prince, I too salute that gracious, gallant presence, holding his first and last Court in the deserted halls of his ancestors.

Next, those inferior and middle-class spectres—for even in Ghostland there are social distinctions—whose shades I have elsewhere more or less successfully evoked, appear again. Down the West Bow the mob drags luckless Captain Porteous to his doom on the dyer's pole in the Grassmarket; the windows of Major Weir's house at the Bends are aglare with unearthly lights, the silence vibrant with the humming of his sister's ceaseless wheel. From out Tweeddale Court runs the unknown murderer as he pockets the bank notes, leaving poor Begbie, the bank porter, dead at the stairfoot, the knife yet sticking in his heart. Here Deacon Brodie hovers in the shadows of the High Street, with his dark lantern and his false keys, about to pay a midnight call upon some unsuspecting friend. Little recks he of the near disaster of Chessel's Court, and the ensuing ceremony on the new drop of the platform in the Lawnmarket. In yonder bustling tavern the boy-poet Fergusson is reciting his latest poem, while the "couthie chieles," charmed by the magic of his verse, forget to drain their pint stoups. Across the Parliament Close near by, the burly figure of Lord Braxfield, wrapped in his old cloak, stumps sturdily home to his house in George Square . . .

But I must no further indulge my fancy. There is grim business ahead; ghouls, rather than ghosts (howsoever profitable), are our grislier objective—those two nightmare shapes, the evil spirits of Burke and Hare, that haunt for all time the purlieus of the West Port.

## I

Before me as I write lies an inch-square bit of brown leather—not, you would think, an inspiring subject for a tale. But perpend. This fragment of human skin, for such it is, has been since 1829 in the possession of three persons only: the original owner, my grandfather, and myself. Inconsiderable in size and unimpressive of aspect, it was nevertheless potent to influence the direction of my future studies. While

yet a small boy, my grandfather would often shew me by request this singular relic and I never wearied of hearing how he came by it. As a matter of history, its first proprietor, the late Mr. William Burke of Edinburgh, in the circumstances hereafter to be related, was publicly anatomized, his carcase thereafter flayed, his hide tanned, and his skeleton by order of Court preserved in the Anatomical Museum of Edinburgh University, where it remains as a memorial of his infamy even unto this day. Mr. Burke's integument being cut up into sortable parcels to suit buyers' tastes and exposed for sale by private bargain, my grandfather, who was then but a young man, invested in a modest shilling's worth. Wealthier purchasers bought larger lots—I have heard that the late Professor Chiene had a tobacco pouch made of this unique material. Personally, despite my predilection for crime, I prefer indiarubber. My grandfather kept his portion confined in a wooden snuff-box; it was shrouded in a yellow scrap of paper, bearing in his autograph the contemporary inscription: "Piece of Skin tan'd from the Body of Burke the Murderer." (As I grew older I plumed myself on my superior orthography.) Thus in my blameless childhood did I first hear the horrid story of Burke and Hare.

The next thing I recall about my acquaintance with these monsters is the issue in parts, in the early Eighties, of James Grant's admirable work, *Old and New Edinburgh*, and I still remember how eagerly I devoured the number relating to the West Port murders. One sentence of that vivid account yet sticks in my memory, where dealing with the murderers' methods he writes: "More is not required—and all is still in that dark room *with the window looking out on the dead wall.*" In due course of nature I succeeded to my grandfather's snuff-box and its incongruous contents; and in the fullness of time it was my fortune to edit *Burke and Hare* in the series of Notable British Trials. Finally, in my friend Mr. James Bridie's most excellent play, *The Anatomist*, I have had the pleasure to see the protagonists of that old



dreadful drama revived for my entertainment in their habit as they lived.

## II

In 1827 the official headquarters of anatomical instruction and research in Edinburgh were situate within the Old College on the South Bridge, under the direction of Professor Monro. But that authorized exponent of the mysteries did not have it all his own way. Six extra-mural rivals competed for the teaching of students of anatomy, and of these the ablest, the most popular with the students, and the most brilliant lecturer was the famous Dr. Robert Knox. The scale upon which this learned industry was then conducted in Edinburgh, the meagre and wholly inadequate quantity of requisite raw material legitimately available, and the exuberant zeal of the young disciples in behalf of their respective masters, led to a lamentable state of affairs. In order to supply the constant and increasing demand for "subjects," there had grown up an ancillary branch of research, carried out behind the scenes by the professional riflers of graves, known by the expressive names of Body Snatchers or Rurrectionists. These subordinate ministers to the needs of science were by the nature of their calling persons of irregular and often drunken habits, as unreliable as they were greedy and unscrupulous; so it frequently happened that the students themselves had to do their own catering, lest the "table" of the "Chief" should lack its daily indispensable equipage. Many and gruesome are the tales told of their adventures, some not without a certain grisly humour; but one necessary result of such pursuits was a coarsening of the moral grain, an indifference to decent feelings, and a callous recklessness regarding human life which, as we shall see, was to bear fearful fruit. One might have thought that the manners of Dr. Knox's pupils would be ameliorated by the great gifts and prestige of their preceptor; as a matter of fact they were even more bold and aggressive than their fellows. For

the Doctor treated his confrères with savage contempt and in his lectures ceased not to jeer at what he deemed their incompetence. Especially did he have his knife—and he was a ruthless operator—in his learned and orthodox colleague, Professor Monro. Wherefore was the jealousy of the several classes embittered and Dr. Knox's lads were at all costs prepared to maintain the supremacy of their master.

It chanced that on a certain dark November night of 1827 two shabby and disreputable-looking men were hanging about the quadrangle of the College, wherein were situated the anatomical rooms of Professor Monro. They accosted a student who was leaving the building, and asked him the way to the Professor's emporium. They had, it appeared, something to sell that might suit him. Now the student was one of Dr. Knox's pupils; guessing the nature of their wares and delighted to steal a march upon the University, he directed the inquirers to No. 10 Surgeons' Square, the opposition establishment. So the two men thanked him, crossed the road, and went down Infirmary Street to the old ill-famed square by the Cowgate. At No. 10 they were received by the three assistants on night duty, but being new to their trade they were rather bashful in coming to business. Finally it appeared that they were in lawful possession of a corpse, of which in the interests of science and for a suitable remuneration they were willing to dispose. Being told that Dr. Knox sometimes gave as much as £10 for such commodities, the neophytes in carrion registered surprise and pleasure. They hastened to deliver the goods, which, being approved by the Doctor himself, they parted with to him for £7, 10s.

Thus was constituted that terrible trinity whose names are indissolubly associated for all time in the annals of crime. The fate of the three assistants was happier: they were in after life to become those distinguished surgeons, Sir William Fergusson, Thomas Wharton Jones, and Alexander

Miller, whose names are yet eminent in the temple of science. It is a strange world.

### III

The main entrance from the west to the ancient city of Edinburgh was by the West Port in the Grassmarket. The adjacent suburb was known as Portsburgh. The old gates in the city wall had long since vanished, and by the time of our tale the street of the West Port was become a drab thoroughfare of ugly tumbledown dwellings, abandoned to dinginess and decay, occupied by undesirable tenants of the lowest class. The fronts of the houses, as was common in old Edinburgh architecture, were broken at intervals by alleys—locally termed “closes”—leading to back tenements, yards, and waste land behind the street. Dismal and malodorous by day, they were at night both dark and dangerous, being “illuminated” but by scanty oil lamps and unpatrolled by any regular police.

In one of the worst of these unattractive tunnels, Tanner’s Close—so called from the tannery on the north to which it led—was a tramps’ hostel, known as Log’s Lodgings in memory of its late proprietor. His widow still carried on the business, with the assistance of an Irishman of singularly sinister aspect, named William Hare. The couple were not married, but the lady, from motives of delicacy, assumed the style and title of Mrs. Hare. The tariff of their hotel was reasonable: 3d. per night, with liberty to sleep three in a bed, of which there were available seven. It happened that prior to the demise of the late unlamented Log, Hare, being employed as a labourer on the construction of the Union Canal, made the acquaintance of a fellow-countryman similarly engaged, named William Burke. This gentleman also had for helpmate a putative widow, whose name was Helen Macdougall. The Hares and Burke were Irish Catholics; Macdougall, for what it was worth, was a Scots Presby-

terian. When Mr. Burke and lady after various vicissitudes came to Edinburgh, it was natural that they should avail themselves of the privileges offered by Mr. Hare's hotel. Their characters were congenial, their tastes simple, their habits frugal. Potatoes, and whisky—which in those golden days cost little more than milk—formed the staple of their diet. In a small back room Burke practised his art as a cobbler; Hare, ostensibly a hawker, kept his wife, if not his house, in order; Macdougall provided Mrs. Hare with what she had hitherto lacked: the company and support of a female friend.

Among the inmates of the lodging-house in Tanner's Close was an old army pensioner named Donald, who paid his board by means of a small pension. On 29th November 1827 this lodger, who had long been ailing, gave up his room for a more celestial abode. I hasten to add that his death was due to natural causes. Now it chanced that with the customary selfishness of invalids, the old man departed just before his quarter's pension was due. And he owed his benefactors £4! But Hare, much aggrieved by this sharp practise on the part of the deceased, determined to square the account by selling his body to "the Doctors," whose willingness to deal in such wares was a matter of common knowledge. He communicated his idea to Burke, who appreciating the humour and profit of the proposal, agreed to take a hand in the gruesome game; and so began the famous co-partnery whose firm-name was to echo for all time down the corridors of history. A pauper's funeral was arranged for, a shell procured; but before the coffin was "lifted" they unscrewed the lid, took out the corpse, and replaced it with a bag of bark, stolen from the neighbouring tanyard. Thereafter, as we have seen, they made their market of the poor remains. Hare received his own with usury, Burke got his commission, and Dr. Knox his "subject." So the business was concluded to the satisfaction of all concerned.

When Burke and Hare delivered the body of the pen-

sioner at Surgeons' Square they were told "*that they* (Dr. Knox's assistants) *would be glad to see them again when they had another to dispose of,*" an invitation which afforded the philosophic mind of Mr. Burke matter for reflection. The old pensioner, alive, was relatively worthless; dead, he was worth £7, 10s. Hitherto Burke and Hare had fought hard for halfpence; the hint from the young surgeons opened a rose-coloured vista of easy money and light work. Nothing was needed but the stock in trade. Unfortunately, the guests frequenting the tramps' clearing-house in Tanner's Close were mostly birds of passage; it might be long ere another of these was timeously called to his account. Even in the abominable hygienic conditions there obtaining, the feeblest clung to life with regrettable obstinacy.

Pondering on this problem the partners had a brain-wave. Why await the tardy operation of Providence? Surely there were to be found in the purlieus of the city many homeless wanderers whom it were mere charity to relieve of the weary burden of existence, so as it could be done wisely and with safety. And presently the evil shadows of Burke and Hare flitted to and fro about the wynds and closes of the Old Town, seeking such waifs as were like to meet the requirements of the new firm. But either because of their inexperience or of the wariness of their vagrant prey, the first attempts to obtain material proved disappointing. Satan unaccountably failed to maintain his reputation.

#### IV

After the customary Scots celebrations of the New Year were sufficiently recovered from, the firm of Burke and Hare, purveyors-extraordinary to Surgeons' Square, began business in earnest. During the nine months of their joint adventure they successfully carried through sixteen capital transactions. These at least were all that their native modesty would allow them to claim, but there is reason to believe they had other affairs to their credit. The firm kept no

books, and those of Dr. Knox, which would have enabled us to check the sales, were not produced.

In the confusion caused by their bankruptcy and the legal proceedings following thereon, it is natural that the partners, who by then had no means of communicating with each other, should differ as to details and the precise sequence of events; but in the main they confirm one another in all essential particulars. The chief divergence relates to the first murder: Hare naming as the victim, Joseph the Miller, while Burke gives pride of place to the Old Woman from Gilmerston. There is extant an interesting letter of Sir Walter Scott to the publishers of the official report of the trial, in which, having ripely weighed the evidence, he ranks and prefers the Miller to the distinction. "It is not odd," writes Sir Walter, "that Burke, acted upon as he seems always to have been by ardent spirits, and involved in a constant succession of murder, should have misdated the two actions. On the whole Hare and he, making separate confessions, agree wonderfully." So accepting Sir Walter's ruling we begin with Joseph.

This man, a casual visitor to Hare's hotel, became ill of a fever, whereby his hosts feared that the house would get a bad name and the business be affected. To relieve the situation Burke held a pillow on the sick man's face, while Hare lay upon his body to keep down his arms and legs. The miller, who had been previously plied with whisky, made but small resistance; the partners "mentioned to Dr. Knox's young men that they had another subject"; a porter was sent to meet them that evening at the back of the Castle, to whom they delivered the goods in a chest; and they received from Dr. Knox £10 for their trouble. Another lodger, an English hawker "who used to sell spunks (matches) in Edinburgh," fell sick of the jaundice. Him they disposed of in similar fashion, sold his body to the same purchaser, and were paid a like reward. In these two instances, it will be noted, the deceased had really been ill, and the Doctor may

conceivably have attributed death to natural causes. No such excuse is available in the fourteen further cases.

An indigent old woman named Abigail Simpson lived precariously at the village of Gilmerton, whence it was her weekly custom to walk into town to uplift the pension charitably allowed her: eighteenpence and a can of "kitchen fee," *i.e.*, edible odds and ends. Returning from her errand one February afternoon in 1828 she was accosted by Hare, who invited her to rest and refreshment in Tanner's Close. When the whisky gave out, Mrs. Hare bought the guest's can of scraps for 1s. 6d., to be expended on an additional supply of liquor. The old woman waxed merry in her cups; she boasted much of a fair daughter, whom Hare jocosely offered to marry, "and get all the money amongst them." Overcome by the unwonted hospitality, old Abigail presently became unconscious and was put to bed. How she was permitted to live through the night is astonishing; her hosts must themselves have been too drunk for action. Next morning she was persuaded to take a parting glass—or glasses; and when suitably bemused, Hare held her mouth and nose, Burke lay across her body, "and she never stirred." The ritual of the porter and the tea-chest duly observed, the corpse was carried to the class-room. "Dr. Knox came in when they were there. The body was cold and stiff. *Dr. Knox approved of its being so fresh, but did not ask any questions.*" He paid them £10 for it. The two next transactions dealt with a couple of stray women, who severally spending a night at Hare's hotel, were no more seen save by Dr. Knox and his disciples. They fetched £10 apiece.

Now that the partners were in receipt of a regular income their respective shares fell to be apportioned. Of the £10 commonly received from their surgical customer, Hare appropriated £5 to his own use; Burke had to rest content with £4, as he had to pay Mrs. Hare £1 a head, being a sort of pole tax exacted by that lady as proprietrix of the shambles. The marked improvement which had taken place

in the financial circumstances of the joint household did not escape the notice of their neighbours. The mean little house at the foot of the close was become a place of riot and revelry; feasting and fighting were the order of the day and night, and the perpetual gurgling of a flow of whisky was heard in the land. This merriment and joy they gave out to be the fruits of a substantial legacy; but public opinion, doubtless influenced by the recurrent passage of the tea-chest, held that Burke and Hare's fortune had been found by them buried in the earth—that they were in fact Resurrectionists, a recognized and lucrative, though hardly respectable calling. But as the Hares kept open house and Burke was always willing to stand his hand, the dwellers in Portsburgh were prepared to wink at such irregular means of livelihood, and for the time, in the picturesque phrase of Mrs. Nickleby's admirer, "all was gas and gaiters."

## V

Wednesday, 9th April 1828, is one of the three leading dates in the case, for upon that day was committed the murder of Mary Paterson, a deed which struck not only the popular imagination, but a new note in the hideous symphony of these crimes. Heretofore Burke and Hare had preyed upon broken folk, frail, aged, and obscure, whose disappearance from the stream of life left no ripple on the surface. But emboldened by success and assured of the countenance of their patrons, they were now to fly at bigger game.

For the profession of Mary Paterson the Elizabethans had a short title, no longer, my dictionary warns me, in decent use. I shall therefore veil it classically as that of an hetaira. A beautiful girl of eighteen, famed for the perfection of her form, well-educated, amiable, and intelligent, her manifold charms had proved her undoing, and by this time she was squandering them on the streets of Edinburgh. Her parents were dead, relations she had none, and her only friends were casual males and girls as unfortunate as herself. Among the



former, as we shall find, was one of Dr. Knox's assistants, in after years a baronet and Surgeon to Queen Victoria (who would have been vastly shocked by the association); of the latter, the most intimate was one of her own age, Janet Brown, with whom she shared a room in Leith Street.

On the evening of 8th April these two girls, being apprehended in the exercise of their calling, were lodged for the night in the Canongate watch-house. At 6 A.M. next day they were discharged and they immediately sought comfort in a neighbouring public house, kept by a man named Swanston, where they ordered a gill of whisky. Another early customer, a stranger to them, was taking his "morning"—rum and bit-  
ters—at the bar. The damsels found favour in his sight; he introduced himself to them by means of further drinks offered and accepted. The affable unknown then invited them to breakfast at his lodgings. Mary, ever rash and reckless, was nothing loth; Janet, more cautious, demurred. The stranger said he had a pension, "and could keep her handsomely." So in the end both girls agreed to go with him.

Burke—for the astute reader will have penetrated my little mystery—had a brother, Constantine, holding humble office as a city scavenger, and living with his wife and family in Gibb's Close, Canongate. Thither did Burke escort the two young ladies, having presented each of them with a bottle of whisky in token of his regard. On arrival at the house they found the inmates still abed. Burke, in his assumed rôle of lodger, damned their indolence and bade his "landlady" rise and prepare the morning meal, which she did; and presently the guests sat down to a good and plentiful Scots breakfast: tea, bread, eggs, and Finnan haddocks. Thereafter Constantine went off to his manorial duties, Mrs. Constantine busied herself with household matters, and Burke and his visitors turned their attention to the whisky. Soon Mary, a victim to undue hospitality, slept in her chair; Janet, either because she drank less or had the stronger head, was comparatively sober. Perceiving this, her host

prescribed a breath of fresh air, which was obtained in an adjacent tavern and washed down with porter. Doubtless his medical experience suggested the exhibition of mixed drinks as tending to promote repose. Returning from this excursion they found Mary still sound asleep in her chair, and were proceeding to deal with the residue of the whisky, when suddenly the curtains of the bed were flung asunder and from out of it leapt the formidable figure of Burke's domestic partner, Helen Macdougall. She had chanced to pay a morning call on her illegitimate sister-in-law, and learning what was afoot, concealed herself as above for the confusion of her faithless lord. Mrs. Constantine, whispering to Janet that this was the gentleman's wife, left the house to fetch Hare as peacemaker. Meanwhile the virago fell upon the girl, charging her with attempted seduction of her "husband." Poor Janet apologized; she knew not that her entertainer was a married man. Finally, to pacify his outraged mistress, Burke reluctantly let the girl go, which, little dreaming how much she owed to Macdougall's jealousy, Janet somewhat sobered by fright, confusedly did.

She sought counsel of one Mrs. Lawrie, who lived at hand and with whom she had formerly lodged. This lady, harkening to her tale, became suspicious of the purity of Mr. Burke's intentions; so she at once sent Janet back, supported by her own servant, to bring Mary Paterson away. When, having been absent some twenty minutes, Janet with her escort returned to the house, she found there only Macdougall and the two Hares: Mary had vanished. They explained that she was out with Burke but would soon be back and invited her to stay. The servant was dismissed, and Janet, furnished with the inevitable dram, sat down to await the coming of her friend, whose dead and still warm body lay covered with a sheet in the bed behind her chair! Hare in the absence of his partner (who had gone to Surgeons' Square to give the usual intimation and invitation), acted as host, and already looked on Janet as stock worth £10. But Mrs.

Lawrie, her suspicions confirmed, sent her maid back to the rescue, and Hare had the mortification of seeing this valuable asset withdrawn from the firm's custody and control.

The next we see of Mary Paterson—you note that I have discreetly refrained from drawing back the bed-curtains—is upon the table in Dr. Knox's dissecting room, four hours after her death, where she has just been delivered by Messrs. Burke and Hare in the accustomed tea-chest. "She had twopence-halfpenny, which she held in her hand," Burke tells us; and they had some trouble with small boys in the High Street, who pursued him and the porter, crying: "They are carrying a corpse!" but they reached Surgeons' Square in safety. Dr. Knox is charmed with the beauty and freshness of the goods; but Mr. Fergusson, his assistant, despite his experience of such affairs, receives a shock: *he knew the girl, and named her*. He asked Burke where they had got the body. The merchants explained that they had bought it "from an old woman at the back of the Canongate," which in the circumstances was accepted as sufficient. Burke begged leave to cut off, as his perquisite, the girl's magnificent hair, "and one of the students gave him a pair of scissors for that purpose." They then departed, leaving Dr. Knox to expatiate to his admiring class upon the manifold merits of the "subject." So proud was the Doctor of the symmetry of the body, that he caused an artist to make a drawing of it (reproduced in my former account of the case), and kept the corpse undissected in spirits for three months, seemingly from sentimental motives. Even so strong a man as Dr. Knox had his little weaknesses.

Meanwhile Janet Brown, equally lucky and loyal, ceased not to make inquiry for her missing friend. The Constantine Burkes said she had gone to Glasgow with a packman; but as no word came from her and her poor belongings still lay in the lodgings, Janet could make nothing of it. So often as she met Constantine upon his municipal labours she would ask whether there was no word yet of Mary? "How the hell

can I tell about you sort of folk?" retorted the virtuous scavenger. "You are here today and away tomorrow." Such was Mary Paterson's epitaph.

## VI

Two more murders committed that spring may be mentioned briefly. They are commonplace compared with the slayings of Mary Paterson, of Daft Jamie, and of Mrs. Docherty—the three outstanding peaks in this monstrous range of crime. One was an old cinder-wife—"Burke thinks her name was Effie"—who used to sell him for his cobbling such scraps of leather as she unearthed when "raking the back-ets"; the other a drunk woman whom, being haled to the lock-up, Burke prevailed upon the watchman to commit to his more tender care, saying, with truth, that he would "see her home." In each instance the firm's profits were increased by £10.

One day in June Burke met in the High Street a sturdy old Irishwoman, holding by the hand a little boy, her grandchild, who was dumb. She had tramped from Glasgow in hope to find certain friends in Edinburgh. By a fortunate chance Burke knew their address and offered to take her to them; but first, as a countrywoman of his, she must go home with him and drink his health. At Tanner's Close she was ushered into the fatal guest chamber: "that dark room with the window looking out on the dead wall"; Mr. Hare dropped in for a friendly glass, and the door was shut. Meanwhile the dumb boy remained in the kitchen with the two she-wolves. He became frightened and restless at the continued absence of his "granny," and the gang consulted as to what should be done with him. It was at first proposed that, being incapable of speech, he should be "wandered" in the streets at night; but this would provoke inquiry, so it was decided that he must follow his grandmother. While Hare went out to fetch some receptacle of greater capacity than the tea-chest, which was inadequate to the double freight, Burke, in the back

room where the dead woman lay, took the boy on his knee and, in his own expression, "broke his back." Of all the damnable deeds whereby his conscience was branded this is the only one that troubled it: he was haunted o' nights by the piteous look in the dumb boy's eyes. Hare having procured an empty herring barrel, the bodies were crammed into it, and the horse and cart which he kept for his pretended trade of a hawker were requisitioned to convey the cargo to Surgeons' Square. But the horse was on its last legs; halfway along the Cowgate it collapsed, and despite the blows and curses of its humane proprietor it could go no farther. A crowd began to gather, so damning the expense, they hired a passing porter with a "hurley," to which the barrel was safely transferred. £16 was paid for the contents, the students complaining of the tightness with which the goods were packed. The horse, a less marketable commodity, was sold to a knacker. "He [the unhappy quadruped] had two large holes in his shoulders stuffed with cotton, and covered over with a piece of another horse's skin to prevent them being discovered," says Burke; the price received for *him* was negligible and is not recorded.

That month Burke, feeling the need of a holiday—it is satisfactory to know that he slept very badly and had horrible dreams—accompanied Helen Macdougall on a visit to her late husband's relatives in Falkirk. Before they set out, Mrs. Hare took Burke aside and suggested that Macdougall, whom as a Scotswoman she distrusted, should be by him converted into merchandise for behoof of the firm, he to write to Hare that she had died and been buried in the country! Burke resenting this proposition as in bad taste, a coolness was in consequence engendered. Matters became still more strained by his ascertaining, on their return to town, that Hare had been doing a bit of business on his own account. Hare indignantly denied the fact, but inquiry at Surgeons' Square proved that he had sold a woman's body for £8 and appropriated the price. A violent quarrel ensued;

unable to forgive this breach of faith, Burke removed himself and Macdougall from the Hare ménage, and took a room in the house of a cousin; John Broggan, in the basement of a tenement a few doors east of Tanner's Close. But personal ill-feeling had to yield to the exigencies of business; funds were low, and the partners, pocketing their respective grievances agreed, though still living apart, to resume practice.

The reunion was precipitated, surprisingly enough, by the delicacy of Burke's feelings. A young girl named Ann Macdougall came from Falkirk on a return visit to her kinswoman; he regarded her favourably as a suitable "subject," but told Hare that being a relative, "*he did not like to begin first on her.*" So the initial steps were taken by that expert, Burke, despite his scrupulosity, assisting at the finish. The country cousin was, in due season, sent to end her visit with Dr. Knox, who paid £10 for her. Mr. Broggan, commenting on the abrupt departure of the visitor, was given £3 to stifle his curiosity.

The next item in the frightful catalogue was an old charwoman named Mrs. Hostler, who, having been employed to clean up the house, was slain by Burke and Hare during the celebrations incident to the happy confinement of Mrs. Broggan. "She had ninepence-halfpenny in her hand," Burke observes, "which they could scarcely get out of it after she was dead, so firmly was it grasped." The body, concealed in the coal cellar till the merry-making was over, was only valued by Dr. Knox at £8.

A familiar but unreverend figure in the back streets of the city was old Mary Haldane, a retired harlot, who was solacing her remaining years with gin. She had a daughter, Peggy, regrettably following in her mother's footsteps. One day Burke saw Mary standing at a close-mouth in the Grass-market in the condition described as sober, and sorry for it. Sympathizing with her state he invited her to refresh herself at his expense, and she willingly accompanied him to Tanner's Close. There she was royally entreated by the women,

and being overcome by the extent of their libations, was permitted to sleep awhile in Hare's stable. The sleep became eternal, and she was shortly on her way to Surgeons' Square. "She had but one tooth in her mouth, and that a very large one in front," Burke records of this aged Rahab. As we have seen, he was curious in such minutiae.

Peggy Haldane became alarmed at her mother's continued absence. Hearing that the old woman had been seen to enter Hare's hotel, she sought that sinister hostelry in quest of her. She was received by the ladies of the house, who denied that Mary had ever darkened their door, and after some general observations upon the undesirability of disreputable persons entering respectable establishments, they proceeded to cast highly offensive aspersions in particular upon the walk and conversation of mother and daughter. Peggy gave as good—or rather, bad—as she got; the war of words was at its height, when the door of the back room opened and Hare, with a significant glance at the viragoes, mildly asked what was amiss. Peggy, invited within to state her case, was assured that her aged relative had gone to Mid-Calder; Burke appeared opportunely with the indispensable dram. That afternoon poor Peggy joined what remained of her mother in Dr. Knox's rooms, and her introducers got £8 for her.

## VII

The murder of Daft Jamie in October 1828, one of the worst and most audacious of the series, shews that Burke and Hare were become so daring by reason of their repeated successes, that they believed they could do what they pleased without fear of detection.

James Wilson, a "natural" of eighteen, was intellectually a Peter Pan. But though in mind he remained a child, physically he was a fully developed man, big and strong for his age, active, and incapable of fatigue. He had, however, a marked malformation of the feet, of which we shall hear

again. Following upon the discovery of his untimely death an interesting account of his life was published, with many quaint and curious anecdotes of his eccentricities on which I here lack space to enter, though elsewhere I have done justice to his engaging personality. He was one of Old Edinburgh's many "characters," and indeed the most harmless and amusing of them all; and his face and figure were as familiar to the citizens as was the Mercat (Market) Cross. Vitiously to intromit with such a one proves that the murderers had surely incurred the curse of the gods. And yet, amazingly, by favour of Dr. Knox they got away with it! Though Jamie had a mother and sister in the town, he did not live under their roof, preferring to rely on the chance hospitality which all who knew him seem willingly to have afforded. This was the "kenspeckle" and popular being whom Burke and Hare had the effrontery to choose from the inhabitants of Auld Reekie as a suitable "subject" for the exercise of their art.

Mrs. Hare, having one day enticed Jamie upon some pretext to visit the house in Tanner's Close and left him there in conversation with her lord, set forth in search of Burke, with whom returning, she thereafter locked the door on the outside and pushing the key beneath it, discreetly departed. Macdougall was absent. Jamie, though he "liked fine a dram," was in capricious mood; despite the pressing of his hosts he would drink but one glass of whisky. He was induced, however, to take a rest on the pallet in the little back room, and presently in his childish fashion fell asleep. Hare lay down beside him to watch the case, Burke "sitting at the foreshide of the bed." In their diverse accounts of the atrocious scene that followed so soon as they perceived Jamie's slumber to be sufficiently sound for their purpose, each ruffian sought to assign to the other the leading rôle in what they found to be an unpopular tragedy. It is plain that poor Jamie, endowed with the strength of insanity, put up a desperate resistance to his destroyers, and had he fought for life against a single



adversary, would surely have come off victorious. But the combined attack of his base assailants proved too much for his pluck and prowess, and after a fierce and prolonged struggle they effected their hellish aim. Even these devils were moved to admiration: Hare says Jamie "fought like a hero"; Burke describes his courage as "terrible." After stripping the body, Hare took the brass snuff-box and Burke the accompanying spoon, Daft Jamie's sole and greatly prized possessions. The clothes Burke presented to his small nephews in Gibb's Close, and the remains were disposed of to Dr. Knox at the usual rate of exchange.

Now although I do not wish to anticipate what will have to be said regarding the responsibility of that distinguished anatomist in the premises, while the facts are yet fresh in the reader's mind I would point out: (1) that the deadly struggle as described by both the murderers must inevitably have left *some* traces upon the victim's body; (2) that so soon as it was unpacked from the tea-chest it was at once recognized as that of Daft Jamie by the janitor of the rooms, and by several of the students then present; "*but Dr. Knox persisted all along that it was not Jamie*" until the hue and cry arose, when contrary to the regular rotation of "subjects," he ordered its immediate dissection; and (3) that Mr. Fergusson, the senior assistant, forthwith possessed himself of the feet, which owing to their notorious malformation—for Jamie went always bare-footed—would have furnished indisputable and ready proof of identity, while another assistant made away with the head, as equally susceptible of recognition. Thus, had the attention of the authorities been directed to Surgeons' Square, they could have found no clue to the mystery of Daft Jamie's disappearance.

Vainly did the mother and sister perambulate the city ways, seeking some tidings of the missing lad; none knew or had seen anything of him, and they ceased not from their search until the sudden rending of the veil which for nine months had hidden the horror of the West Port murders,

revealed in the clear light of justice their hideous features and unparalleled extent.

### VIII

The Portsburgh murder factory had met with such favour in scientific quarters that the time was now deemed ripe for extending and consolidating its operations. It was definitely arranged that the managing partners should receive a fixed sum for all such "subjects" as they were able to supply: £10 in winter and £8 in summer. Further, a third partner—popularly believed to be David Paterson, Dr. Knox's janitor—was to be assumed, with whom Burke was to proceed to Ireland, with a view to increasing the firm's output by opening up a fresh market, or in the words of that expert: "to try the same there, and to forward them to Hare, and he was to give them to Dr. Knox." But before this promising project could be put into execution, another execution had put its promoter permanently out of business, and he was himself converted into a "subject" for the benefit of that science to which he had offered so many vicarious sacrifices. The irony of the situation should have appealed to his native sense of humour.

In perpetrating what proved to be their last murder, Burke and Hare reverted to their earlier methods. It was for them quite a humdrum affair after the sensational and foolhardy slayings of Mary Paterson and Daft Jamie: only a little old beggar woman, frail and friendless, a stranger within the city gates: one, in their view, too inconsiderable for anybody to bother about. Yet the business, trifling as it seemed to them, was in fact the last straw. On Friday, 31st October 1828, this humble instrument of Providence entered Rymer's spirit shop, at the head of Tanner's Close, begging for alms. At the counter Mr. Burke chanced to be taking his morning dram. Perceiving by her speech that she was Irish, he hailed her as a countrywoman; and learning that her name was Docherty—which he alleged to be also that of his

mother—he claimed her for a kinswoman. Invited to make his home her own during her sojourn in Edinburgh, the little old woman joyfully accepted and was cordially received there by the genial and kind-hearted Macdougall. Burke then went out to inform Hare “he had got a ‘shot’ in the house for the Doctor,” and to bespeak his co-operation in the requisite arrangements.

It was Hallowe’en; and to that time-honoured festival, as holden in the Burke home, the Hares had been invited. His partner, he judged, would have no objection to combine business with pleasure. The accommodation of the house was limited: a single room, 16 feet 2 inches, by 7 feet 5 inches; and its resources were already overtaxed by the presence of an ex-soldier named Gray, who with his wife and child were there for a week as paying guests. It was accordingly agreed and provided that they, the Grays, should for that night remove to the Hare hostelry. (The firm desired to keep in touch with them; they might be useful in the way of business later.) So in that small and bloody chamber was spent a jovial evening. There was abundance of whisky, Burke was in excellent voice, delighting his guests with the songs of their native land, and as the spirits—animal and alcoholic—rose amain, the parties began to dance. Sounds of mirth and revelry echoed through the basement flat; to these succeeded the noise of brawling and fighting, too common to attract attention or to cause interference. Then about midnight was heard a cry of “Murder!” and a violent beating from within upon Burke’s door. A neighbour went out to look for a policeman, but failing to find one, returned to bed.

Next morning, when the Grays came back, the little old woman was gone. They asked what had become of her, and Macdougall replied that being “ow’r friendly” with Burke, she had kicked her out of the house. After breakfast Mrs. Gray, in pursuance of her unladylike habit, lit her morning pipe. At the foot of the connubial couch was a heap of straw,

on which the lodgers slept. Approaching this to look for her child's stockings, she was sharply rebuked by Macdougall, who bade her "keep out of there." Burke, too, expressed much annoyance at her harmless action, alleging his fear of fire. This unusual inhibition aroused Mrs. Gray's curiosity which, woman-like, she determined at the first opportunity to satisfy. Not until the late afternoon was she able to do so. Burke went out for more liquor, Macdougall was reposing on the bed, and beside it sat a young lad named Broggan, the landlord's son, whom Burke, before he left ordered not to stir from the chair until his return. But when Macdougall arose and went forth, Broggan rashly forsook his post, and the couple were at last alone. They went instantly to the forbidden corner, and lifting the straw, uncovered the dead and naked body of the little old woman. Horrified, they hastily caught up their small belongings and hurried from the house. Macdougall, returning, met them in the passage. They told her what they had seen. The terrified hag fell on her knees, imploring them not to "inform"; she offered present money, and swore it would be "worth £10 a week to them" if only they kept silent. But the Grays were proof against temptation; they left the house and communicated with the police. The upright conduct of Gray, a penniless and homeless man, to whose integrity alone the unmasking of the murder gang was due, met with most inadequate reward. A subscription opened in his behalf produced under £10. The public was less lavish of its money than Macdougall.

When the police reached the house at 8 P.M. they found the birds of prey about to fly their foul nest. Asked as to the present whereabouts of the little woman, Burke stated that she had gone away at 7 a.m. and that Mr. Hare had witnessed her departure; Macdougall, separately interrogated, said the woman had left at 7 p.m. In view of these conflicting statements, and of the fact that there was seen upon the straw a quantity of fresh blood, the pair were apprehended.

Early next morning the police paid their long overdue visit to Dr. Knox's rooms. The janitor produced a tea-chest, delivered the evening before in the ordinary course of business. On being opened it was found to contain a dead body, identified at once by the Grays, and later by others, as that of the little old woman. Their next call was upon Mr. and Mrs. Hare, whom they surprised in bed and took into custody. When confronted with the corpse of their victim the prisoners one and all swore that they had never seen the woman before, alive or dead. A post-mortem examination of the remains proved inconclusive. It was made by Mr. Black, the police surgeon, and by the eminent Dr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Christison, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence in Edinburgh University. No indications of death from natural disease were found, and certain superficial injuries were plainly due to the forcing of the body into the tea-chest. The appearances were *consistent* with death by suffocation, but of that there was no positive *proof*. Repeatedly examined, the four prisoners continued to deny all accession to the murder.

What, in these aggravating circumstances, was the Crown to do? Nothing was as yet definitely known regarding the commission of the other crimes, but there was a feeling that the accused could if they chose throw a light upon the many mysterious disappearances which, during the last nine months, had caused so much uneasiness in official quarters. The Lord Advocate, Sir William Rae, came regretfully to the conclusion that there was no sufficient proof either of the murder or of the actual perpetrator; he therefore, with extreme reluctance, decided to take one or other of the accused as witness against the rest, rather than that the whole four miscreants should escape. The desirability of getting information, otherwise unobtainable, as to the suspected further crimes was an additional factor in his Lordship's decision. Burke was believed rightly or wrongly to be the ring-leader, so he was not approached. Macdougall refused to

turn King's evidence; but Hare gladly, nay enthusiastically accepted the part. As he could not bear witness against his spouse, her testimony had also to be accepted. The pair proved only too ready to tell their horrible tale; but as the witnesses of truth, they shewed a regrettable eagerness to shift as much of the responsibility as they could on to the shoulders of their former partner. Still, without the information—howsoever affected by the modesty with which they sought to minimize their own share in the transactions—that they were willing to furnish, the Crown would have known nothing of the fate of Mary Paterson and of Daft Jamie.

After considering upon which items of the ghastly catalogue Burke and Macdougall should be tried, the Lord Advocate decided to charge them with three: the murders of Mary Paterson, of James Wilson, and of "Madgy or Margery or Mary M'Gonigal or Duffie or Campbell or Docherty," under which imposing style and title the reader will hardly recognize the little old woman. In her case, at least, his Lordship was in a position to produce a tangible *corpus delicti*.

## IX

The trial—which was to rank as Scotland's most famous criminal case—began on Christmas Eve. As I have elsewhere furnished a verbatim report of the case I shall do no more here than mention such facts as are needful to continue the narrative.

"It may surprise the young barrister of to-day," writes Lord Kingsburgh in his strangely deficient volume of reminiscences, "to know that the Law Room, which they now frequent for study, was the Second Division Court Room, to which the bow-window at the corner was added later, and that in that confined space the celebrated trial of Burke and Mrs. Macdougall took place, the Judges stimulating their jaded nerves by drinking coffee on the Bench during an adjournment in the middle of the night. This I learned from an eye-witness." The Senators who suffered this painful ex-

perience were the Lord Justice-Clerk (Boyle), Lords Pitmilley, Meadowbank, and Mackenzie. The Lord Advocate and three Advocates-Depute conducted the prosecution. Though it was a "Poor" case, *i.e.* one in which there were no fees, hence commonly conducted by an inexperienced junior, the sporting instincts of the Scots Bar supplied the pannels (prisoners) with the services of some of its most distinguished members. Burke was defended by the Dean of Faculty (Moncreiff), Patrick Robertson, Duncan M'Neill, and David Milne; Macdougall, by Henry Cockburn, Mark Napier, Hugh Bruce, and George Patton. Of these, some rose to highest judicial office as Lord President, Lord Justice-Clerk, and Lords of Session; others achieved literary fame.

The indictment being read, counsel for the defence objected to the accumulation of charges, and after long debate the Court held that the three must be tried separately, allowing the Lord Advocate to choose whichever he liked to take first. His Lordship decided to begin with the last charge: the murder of Mrs. Docherty; and to that the proof was accordingly restricted. The effect of this course was in many ways lamentable; but the most unfortunate result was this: of all the sixteen murders, *the only "subject" which had not been seen and personally examined by Dr. Knox was the one selected.* Had either of the two other charges been taken, the Doctor and his assistants must have been called as witnesses in order to prove the death, and would themselves have become "subjects" for cross-examination. But as a conviction was obtained on the third charge, the others were not gone into at all. This state of matters was very strongly resented by the public and by the Press, and we shall presently see the attempts that were made to remedy it.

Certain of the neighbours having deponed to seeing the old woman in Burke's house on Hallowe'en, David Paterson, Dr. Knox's janitor, stated that Burke called at his house, No. 26 West Port, at midnight that day. Witness accompanied him by request to his abode, where he found Macdougall and

the Hares. Burke pointed to the straw, saying "he had procured something for the Doctor." Witness did not offer to inspect it, but told him to communicate with Dr. Knox direct. Next morning Burke and Hare had a meeting with the Doctor in his rooms; he then instructed witness to receive any package brought by them. At 7 P.M. Burke and Hare returned with a porter and a tea-chest, which, it being Saturday night, was deposited unopened in the Doctor's cellar by Mr. Jones, the assistant on duty. Thereafter Jones and witness walked out to Dr. Knox's house at Newington to report—Burke, Hare, and the two women following. The Doctor gave witness £5 for the men, the balance to be paid on Monday, when the condition of the goods had been ascertained. Witness then described the coming of the police to the dissecting-rooms next morning (Sunday), and the opening of the chest in their presence. Cross-examined, he admitted he knew Burke and Hare. They acted "conjunctly," and Dr. Knox had often dealt with them before for dead *unburied* bodies. All the parties were the worse of drink when he called at Burke's house that night.

The Grays told their tale; and the porter said that, being employed by Burke "to carry something," he helped to pack the body into the chest. "A good deal of pressure was required for putting the lid on."

When the Lord Advocate called his next witness there was "sensation in Court" indeed. Hare entered the box with a grin and gave his evidence with unblushing effrontery. At the Hallowe'en party Burke and he quarrelled and fought. The old woman was frightened and twice ran out of the house, calling: "Murder!" Each time she did so, Macdougall fetched her back. She stumbled over a stool and was too drunk to rise. Burke fell upon her and held her down until she ceased to breathe. During the murder, witness sat in a chair the whole time, looking on. Henry Cockburn rose to cross-examine. His first question was: "Have you been connected in supplying the doctors with subjects on other occa-



sions?" The Lord Advocate promptly objected; the question was allowed, but the witness was told he was not bound to answer so as to incriminate himself. Hare then replied in the negative, but admitted that he "saw them doing it." Cockburn next successively asked: How often? Was this the first murder he had been concerned in? Was a murder committed in his house in October? (Daft Jamie). Witness, duly warned as before, declined to answer. Mrs. Hare corroborated. So soon as Burke attacked the old woman, she and Macdougall withdrew into the passage. On their return to the room, fifteen minutes later, they saw nothing of the guest. "I had a supposition that she had been murdered," said the witness, coolly; "I have seen such tricks before." Asked why she did not seek assistance from the neighbours, she tartly replied: "The thing had happened two or three times before, and it was not likely I should tell a thing to affect my husband." This truculent and forbidding hag held the while in her maternal grasp a wretched infant, then in the throes of whooping-cough, which, as Cockburn afterwards reminded the jury, "seemed at every attack to fire her with intenser anger and impatience, till at last the infant was plainly used merely as an instrument for delaying or evading whatever question it was inconvenient for her to answer."

The medical evidence came practically to this: in chief, that death was probably due to suffocation by violence; in cross, that the appearances were merely suspicious.

To the long and elaborate addresses of counsel and the able charge of the presiding Judge I cannot here do justice; the reader may study them at length in my report of the trial. The Dean of Faculty, for Burke, began his speech at three o'clock in the morning, the proceedings having already lasted seventeen hours! Cockburn started at five, and spoke for an hour in behalf of Macdougall. The Justice-Clerk's charge, the weight of which was heavily against both panels, occupied over two hours. At half-past eight, on the morning of Christmas Day, the jury retired to consult, and

in fifty minutes returned to Court with their verdict: Burke, Guilty; Macdougall, Not Proven. Turning to his companion in the dock, Burke remarked: "Nellie, you are out of the scrape." The Justice-Clerk, in pronouncing sentence of death, said his only doubt was whether Burke's body should not be hung in chains, but he directed that it be publicly dissected and anatomized. His Lordship further expressed the hope that his skeleton would be preserved as a memorial of his atrocious crimes. All which, as we know, was well and truly done. The Court then rose, having sat continuously for four-and-twenty hours.

## X

The universal joy on the conviction of Burke, tempered by grief for the acquittal of Macdougall, was well-nigh discounted by the disappointment, wrath, and indignation felt at the escape of Hare. The non-appearance in the witness-box of Dr. Knox himself and his three assistants was very bitterly resented. "Vengeance on Hare!" cried the people; "Where are the doctors?" These sentiments were vehemently re-echoed by the Press; never, as far as I know, has so fierce a newspaper campaign been fought over any murder trial.

Meanwhile Macdougall, having been set at liberty, with unbelievable boldness or stupidity went back to her home in Portsburgh. The rumour of her return quickly spread, a huge crowd besieged the house, and but for the intervention of a strong force of police she would infallibly have been torn in pieces. Secured for a time in jail, she subsequently effected her escape unnoticed, and so passes out of the story. Mrs. Hare, after undergoing similar exciting experiences at the hands of the enraged populace, contrived to reach Greenock whole. Sailing from that seaport for her native country, she vanishes from our view. The disposal of Hare furnished the authorities with a more difficult problem. To let him loose meant, in the then state of public feeling, cer-

tain death, so he was kept in the Calton Jail until my Lord Advocate could make up his mind what to do with him.

On 3rd January 1829 Burke, in the condemned cell, made what is known as his "official" confession; on the 21st he confided to an enterprising journalist a further and much fuller statement, called the "*Courant*" confession, from the title of the journal in which, after the author's death, the manuscript was published.

At eight o'clock in the morning of the 29th, at the head of Liberton's Wynd—the site of the gallows is still marked by two reversed sets in the paving of the High Street, at the northwest corner of the County Buildings—in presence of a vast crowd, estimated at 25,000 and said to be the largest that had ever assembled in the streets of Edinburgh, William Burke, the murderer, was sent to his account. The rascal multitude had waited patiently all night, in pouring rain, so as to be in good time for the performance; the elite of Edinburgh society (including, as I have elsewhere shewn, Sir Walter Scott) viewed the entertainment in relative comfort from the windows of the towering tenements overlooking the scaffold.

The measure of Burke's punishment was felt to be peculiarly appropriate: like his victims he met his death by stifling; like theirs, his remains formed a "subject" for scientific research. On the following day his body was delivered to Professor Monro, who in terms of the sentence dissected it in public. The show started with a private view, admission to which was by ticket, a privilege highly resented by the students. The precincts of the Old College were beset by indignant undergraduates, determined to get into the classroom; there was a riot in the quadrangle; finally the authorities gave way, and they were allowed in by batches of fifty. Next day the public were admitted, and from 10 A.M. till dark a continuous stream of sightseers enjoyed the edifying spectacle, the total attendance numbering 30,000. "Who is

he," asks Sir Walter in his *Journal*, "that says we are not ill to please in our objects of curiosity?" Thereafter, as I have told, Burke was flayed, his skin tanned, his body salted and, with exquisite propriety, packed into a barrel for purposes of future lectures, and ultimately his articulated bones were set up to grace the University museum. Never was murderer more comprehensively disposed of; never was justice more amply satisfied; never was "subject" more effectually "burked."

## XI

There remained the burning question: What was to be done with Hare? To Press and public the answer seemed simple: he had been examined in Court as a witness in one charge only; he must now be brought to trial on the two other charges, regarding which he had given no evidence. But the Lord Advocate, after long and careful consideration of the whole matter, felt bound to dissent from the popular judgment. In view of the immunity given to Hare by his authority, his Lordship was of opinion that he was legally barred from prosecuting the informer further.

When all hope of forcing the Crown to take action had to be abandoned, a movement was made to institute against Hare a private prosecution for the murder of Daft Jamie, generally regarded as the most flagrant of the crimes, at the instance of his mother and sister. The necessary funds being readily raised, a law agent was instructed and Francis Jeffrey retained as counsel. On 16th January a petition was presented to the Sheriff by the private prosecutors, Mrs. and Miss Wilson, praying that Hare, who was still in custody, be examined upon the charge, and a precognition of other witnesses taken. Hare countered by a petition applying to be released and to have the proposed precognition stopped. The case was argued before the Sheriff, Duncan M'Neill appearing for Hare, when his Lordship decided in favour of the Wilsons; but in view of the novelty of the point, allowed

Hare to apply to the High Court of Justiciary. This was accordingly done by Bill of Advocation, Suspension, and Liberation. The Court ordered intimation of the Bill to be made to the Crown; and the Lord Advocate in his answers thereto explained that the assurance given to Hare was unqualified, and was meant to be understood as excluding the possibility of future trial or punishment for any of the crimes concerned. At the hearing before the High Court, the case was debated at great length and with equal forensic learning and ingenuity. On 2nd February it was advised: the Lords, by a majority of four to two, held that Hare could not be prosecuted for the murder of Daft Jamie, ordered him to be set at liberty, and quashed the proceedings taken against him by the Wilsons.

Any criminal prosecution being now out of the question, a final attempt was made to punish Hare by means of a civil action by the Wilsons, claiming an assythment (damages) of £500 for the murder of their relative. They alleged that Hare was *in meditatione fugæ* (about to flee the country), and prayed for his commitment until he should find caution (security) for his appearance to defend the action. Upon this point Hare was examined, and refusing to answer any questions either as to the murder or his own prospective arrangements, was committed to prison until he found caution as required. It being obvious that he could never do so, let alone pay the assythment were it found due, the warrant was withdrawn, and on 5th February Hare was finally let loose. The proposed action can hardly have been serious; probably it was meant merely to give him as much annoyance, and to keep him in jail as long as possible.

On his release Hare was conveyed in a hackney coach to Newington, where, without pausing to pay his respects to Dr. Knox, he joined, in disguise, the southward mail. At the first stage the passengers alighted at the inn for supper. Among them, by a strange chance, was the junior counsel for the Wilsons, who disclosed to his fellow-travellers the

identity of their companion. So, when the mail-coach reached Dumfries, the news was soon all over the town, and presently the King's Arms, in which Hare had sought sanctuary, was beset by an angry crowd, impolitely shouting in concert the alliterative slogan: "‘Burke’ the ——!" While in order to distract the attention of the mob, a chaise was ostentatiously brought round to the front door, Hare was smuggled out of the house by a back window and safely lodged in prison. This manœuvre being detected, the mob next attacked the jail, the riot continuing throughout the night; but eventually, by persuasion of the batons of a hundred special constables, the crowd was dispersed. Very early next morning, escorted by a sheriff-officer and a guard of militiamen, the odious visitor was conveyed out of the town. By daybreak he was beyond the Border, and nothing further of his adventures is recorded.

There is a tradition that, having been identified by some fellow-workmen as the West Port murderer and consequently cast into a lime pit, whereby he lost his sight, Hare survived for many years as a blind beggar in the streets of London; and naughty children were admonished by nurses that unless they were "good," they would be delivered into the hands of that fearsome miscreant.

## XII

There are three incidents connected with the dreadful drama which, though in themselves inconsiderable, seem to me significant and typical as regards the psychology of the principal performers. When Hare, being in the prison yard, was informed of the result of the trial, he capered about in fiendish glee at having himself escaped justice at the cost of his accomplice's life. The malevolence and hideous levity of the wretch shocked even the hardened warders. When the sands of time being for him well-nigh sunk, Burke, who since his condemnation had shewn no emotion whatever, was seen to be sensibly perturbed. His ghostly counsellor, believing

his conscience to be at length awakened, hopefully asked what was worrying him. "I think," said Burke musingly, "I am entitled, and ought to get that five pounds from Dr. Knox which is still unpaid on the body of the woman Docherty." "Why," exclaimed the other, "Dr. Knox lost by the transaction, as the body was taken from him!" "That was not my business," sharply retorted the penitent. "I delivered the subject, and he ought to have kept it." He explained that he needed the money for a new coat, as he wished on his last public appearance "to be respectable"! The blend of callous selfishness and conceit is noteworthy. When Dr. Knox first met his students after the Christmas recess and the revelations of the trial, he announced to his class in his introductory lecture, with reference to the widespread censure of his conduct in relation to the crimes: "I will do just as I have done heretofore." The intellectual arrogance of the man, his colossal egoism, and imperviousness to adverse criticism are all summed up in that amazing pronouncement. Thus will it be seen that the three protagonists had something in common over and above the similarity of their taste in "subjects."

### XIII

Seldom is the life of a great and good man written with such gusto and devotion as is the biography of Dr. Knox by his admirer and former student, Dr. Lonsdale. Dr. Knox had but one eye, and never saw more with it than suited his convenience; Dr. Lonsdale, equipped with the usual number, fails totally to see either spot or blemish in the fair character of his hero. Yet none of us is perfect, and the partiality of the author for his "subject" has blinded him, as we shall find, to sundry wrinkles in the Doctor's moral make-up. At the time of the trial, when the fierce light of publicity was turned upon his professional pursuits, the domestic atmosphere of Dr. Knox remained obscure. The day's work done, he shut the door of his house at No. 4 Newington Place, and Edinburgh knew nothing of him until he appeared next morning

in Surgeons' Square, brilliant, flamboyant, and pre-eminent in his art as usual. Of social relations he neither had nor desired to have any; he was secretly married "to a person of inferior rank"—perhaps a euphemism for his cook—by whom he had a small family; his private life was a thing apart and looked upon askance by the respectable. His sinister countenance and repulsive manner, his loud attire, his cynical and caustic speech, his avowed scorn of creeds and churches, were little likely to commend him to the self-righteous and conventional inhabitants of the strait-laced city of Edinburgh. Even among his medical confrères he had no friends; for it was his amiable custom on every possible occasion to hold them up to ridicule and contempt, and such references in his lectures as have been preserved to Professor Monro, Liston, and other rival teachers of anatomy, are so virulent as almost to baffle belief.

On the credit side is the unquestioned fact that he was the idol of his classes; his disciples swore by him, and for them as his biographer justly claims, Knox was *primus et incomparabilis*. And they stuck at nothing to enhance the fame of their preceptor. "He lived to lecture," says Dr. Lonsdale; his class numbered over 500 students; he had to deliver his lectures thrice a day, and he spared neither time nor money (some have added, conscience) in the endeavour to maintain his preeminence as a demonstrator. Dr. Lonsdale states that in one session alone he spent above £700 on "subjects," and boasts that "No. 10 Surgeons' Square had a supply which no other establishment possessed." A notice of Course of Lectures for that fatal winter session of 1828-29 (a copy of which I have reproduced elsewhere), contains the suggestive intimation: "Arrangements have been made to secure as usual an ample supply of Anatomical Subjects." All this told heavily against the Doctor when the crash came and one source of his supply was "demonstrated" to a horrified world.

Robert Knox was born at Edinburgh in 1791. His father



was a mathematics master at George Heriot's, his mother was a German. To maternal heredity has been ascribed certain of his less lovable traits. Educated at the High School, he left it in 1800 as Dux and Gold Medallist, and joining the medical classes of Edinburgh University, devoted himself specially to the study of anatomy. But he deserted the orthodox professor for Dr. John Barclay, the brilliant extra-mural lecturer, whose best pupil he soon became. Graduating in 1814, he began his life-long contributions to medical journals; in 1815 was attached to the military hospital in Brussels and attended the wounded from Waterloo; and in 1817 sailed for South Africa, as surgeon of the 72nd Highlanders. His sporting record while at the Cape is remarkable, rivaling in thrills the surprising adventures of a later medical traveller, Dr. Pritchard. One hopes, however, that they are more authentic. On his return to England, having left the army, he spent the years 1821-22 studying anatomy in the medical schools of the Continent; and 1823 saw him settled in Edinburgh, his whole time being given to dissection. In the following year he formed a Museum of Comparative Anatomy in Surgeons' Hall, and was appointed its Conservator. In 1825 he joined as colleague and successor his old chief, Dr. Barclay, and began the first course of his famous lectures in the winter session of 1825-26. Such in briefest outline is the distinguished career which, whether from lack of judgment or by wilful fault, was so wantonly wasted and destroyed.

Let us glance for a moment at the sort of criticism which Dr. Knox ignored and affected to despise. The *Caledonian Mercury*, Edinburgh's leading "organ," likened his relations with Burke and Hare to those of Macbeth with the murderers of Banquo, and the other local newspapers were equally plain-spoken and defamatory. Professor Wilson, "Christopher North," wrote thus of him in *Blackwood's*: "He is ordered to open his mouth and speak, or be for ever dumb. Sixteen uninterred bodies—for the present I sink

the word murdered—have been purchased within nine months by him and his, from the two brutal wretches who lived by that trade. Let him prove to the conviction of all reasonable men that it was impossible he could suspect any evil; that the practice of selling the dead was so general as to be almost universal among the poor of this city; and that he knew it to be so; and then we shall send his vindication abroad on all the winds of heaven.” Yet Dr. Knox continued, in the modern phrase, to carry on as if nothing out of the way had happened, and beyond the declaration in his opening lecture already mentioned, took not the least notice of the grave accusations thus made publicly against him.

The people of Edinburgh, who could not give literary vent to their feelings—for the following popular quatrain can hardly be described as literature:

Up the close and down the stair,  
But and ben wi’ Burke and Hare.  
Burke’s the butcher, Hare’s the thief,  
Knox the boy that buys the beef—

also manifested their appreciation of his position in more practical form. On the night of 12th February a great crowd gathered upon the Calton Hill, where a life-size figure of the Doctor, garbed in raiment of the well-known gaudy hues and bearing on its back a label: “Knox, the associate of the infamous Hare,” was the object of the meeting. Thence it was carried in procession to Newington, and having been solemnly hanged upon a tree in the front garden of No. 4 Newington Place, the residence of the original, was thereafter consumed by fire. The windows of the house were smashed with stones, and it was long before the police, who got access by the back, succeeded in driving off the assailants. Meanwhile the Doctor, who had donned his old military cloak and armed himself with a brace of pistols, a sword, and a Highland dirk, was with difficulty restrained

from sallying forth to give battle in defence of his principles and property; but persuaded at length of the futility of engaging singlehanded so fierce a mob, he consented to retire from the field by the back door, and for a space left the city.

The same night an attack upon his dissecting-rooms in Surgeons' Square was repulsed with loss, certain of the rioters being taken and subsequently fined for breach of the peace. Even Portobello, that blameless bathing-place, under suspicion of harbouring the obnoxious surgeon, was moved to take action, and he was once again hanged and burnt in effigy at the head of Tower Street, on the site of the old-time gibbet. When things were quieter, Dr. Knox returned to town and resumed his lectures. But it was necessary for him to be attended by a bodyguard of students, lest the common folk, notoriously intolerant of scientists, should give forcible expression to their views.

Something had to be done about it; for the credit of the city and the University, things could not remain as they were; accordingly it was announced that a committee of gentlemen had undertaken the rather invidious task of inquiring into Dr. Knox's relations with the Wolves of whom, in popular belief, he was the shepherd. "The rank, station, and character of these individuals [the gentlemen, not the Wolves]," observed the *Scotsman*, "assure us that they will act with the strictest impartiality." Doubtless they did so; yet the form and manner of their proceedings left much to be desired. The members were nominated by the Doctor himself; the investigation was conducted in private; neither the names of such witnesses as were examined nor the nature of their evidence was disclosed; and the chairman, the Most Noble the Marquess of Queensberry, resigned before the hearing, which occupied six weeks, was completed, no reason being given for his withdrawal. When the report was ready it was communicated to the Press by its originator,

who, in sending it for publication, broke for the first time his long silence. He stated that he had taken opinion of counsel regarding the calumnies of which he had been the object; that the Dean of Faculty had advised him "there was no want of actionable matter"—an opinion in which, if I may say so, I respectfully concur; but he refrained from seeking legal redress, because the disclosure in Court of dissecting-room methods might "shock the public and be hurtful to science"! Of the much more important matter, his personal dealings with Burke and Hare, Dr. Knox makes no mention.

The committee's report satisfied nobody except its begetter. While admitting, as they were bound to do, that the circumstances in which the subjects were furnished by the murderers "appear calculated to excite suspicion," they "found no evidence of their actually having excited it in the mind of Dr. Knox or of any other of the individuals who saw the bodies." Still, they thought the Doctor had acted throughout "in a very incautious manner," and regarded as "unfortunate" his orders to his assistants to make no inquiries, as likely "to diminish or divert the supply of subjects." They regretted that the practice of his rooms was such as "unintentionally" to facilitate the disposal of the victims of the murders. The point was afterwards very fairly put by Sir Robert Christison, who as Dr. Christison was the leading medical expert at the trial: "Knox, a man of undoubted talent but notoriously deficient in principle and in heart, was exactly the person to blind himself against suspicion and fall into blameable carelessness." None is so blind as he who will not see. Let us leave it at that.

His students, of course, were overjoyed at the "acquittal" of their idol and his vindication from the blasphemies of the profane. They presented him with a golden cup in commemoration of his triumph. In accepting this tribute, the Doctor said he did so as evidence of how all reasonable men regarded "the absurd imputations against me by which the public has been industriously misled." In certain coloured

caricatures of the day the cup is represented as filled with an ominous fluid—not wine.

Paterson, the janitor, also at this time bulked largely in the public eye, by reason of a pamphlet which he published on the late “horrid transactions,” entitled: *Letter to the Lord Advocate, disclosing the Accomplices, Secrets, and other Facts relative to the late Murders . . .* By the Echo of Surgeons’ Square (Edinburgh: 1829). He had in his degree participated in the popular opprobrium attaching to his principal, and maintained that he had been made “the scape-goat for a personage in higher life.” But his contention, as elaborated in a series of letters to the Press, is not convincing. Paterson had the effrontery to suggest to Sir Walter Scott that they might collaborate in a book about Burke and Hare! which caused the Author of Waverley, not without warrant, to damn his impudence.

The subsequent history of Dr. Knox makes but sorry reading, and I do not propose to dwell on it. His once crowded classes gradually dwindled; “the tide was on the ebb,” Dr. Lonsdale sadly records, “and the growing animosity of his contemporaries rendered the ebb more and more apparent.” In 1837 he applied for the Chair of Pathology, vacant by the resignation of Dr. John Thomson, whom, having held other professorial preferment, Dr. Knox in his pleasant way called “the old chair-maker.” He was not appointed; and in a later application for the chair of Physiology he was also unsuccessful. In 1839 he gave up his old rooms in Surgeons’ Square to become a lecturer on anatomy in the Argyle Square Medical School—a marked declension. His next move was to Glasgow, where he tried to establish himself again as a teacher; but the enrolments for his class were so few that he returned the fees. In London, his final resort, he was for a time according to his biographer, in general practice at Hackney; and “one of his last occupations,” Sir Robert Christison tells us, “was that of lecturer, demonstrator, or show-man, to a travelling party of Ojibbeway Indians.” He died

on 20th December 1862, at the age of 71, and was buried at Woking: Recalling their relative positions, his fate was as terrible as that of Hare and less merciful than Burke's.

. . . . .

Even the dark cloud that so long lowered over Edinburgh had its silver lining. In 1832 the passing of the Anatomy Act, due to the revelation of the West Port atrocities, abolished for ever those secret sources of supply which brought about the downfall of the brilliant but unconscionable scientist. And should anyone have found interest in this plain composition and desire a more coloured treatment of the theme, I counsel him to read that grim fantasia by Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Body Snatcher*, wherein he shall breathe the very atmosphere of those fearful times. Or if he would see Burke and Hare, Mary Paterson and the janitor, above all, Dr. Knox himself, in actual flesh and blood, let him take occasion to witness a performance of Mr. Bridie's "lamentable comedy": *The Anatomist*.

# *A Sort of Genius*

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J A M E S T H U R B E R

ON THE morning of Saturday the 16th of September, 1922, a boy named Raymond Schneider and a girl named Pearl Bahmer, walking down a lonely lane on the outskirts of New Brunswick, New Jersey, came upon something that made them rush to the nearest house in Easton Avenue, around the corner, shouting. In that house an excited woman named Grace Edwards listened to them wide-eyed and then telephoned the police. The police came on the run and examined the young people's discovery: the bodies of a man and a woman. They had been shot to death and the woman's throat was cut. Leaning against one of the man's shoes was his calling card, not as if it had fallen there but as if it had been placed there. It bore the name Rev. Edward W. Hall. He had been the rector of the Protestant Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist in New Brunswick. The woman was identified as Mrs. Eleanor R. Mills, wife of the sexton of that church. Raymond Schneider and Pearl Bahmer had stumbled upon what was to go down finally in the annals of our crime as perhaps the country's most remarkable mystery. Nobody was ever found guilty of the murders. Before the case was officially closed, a hundred and fifty persons had had their day in court and on the front pages of the newspapers. The names of two must already have sprung to your mind: Mrs. Jane Gibson, called by the avid press "the pig woman," and William Carpenter Stevens,

once known to a hundred million people simply as "Willie." The pig woman died eleven years ago, but Willie Stevens is alive. He still lives in the house that he lived in fourteen years ago with Mr. and Mrs. Hall, at 23 Nichol Avenue, New Brunswick.

It was from that house that the Rev. Mr. Hall walked at around 7:30 o'clock on the night of Thursday the 14th of September, 1922, to his peculiar doom. With the activities in that house after Mr. Hall's departure the State of New Jersey was to be vitally concerned. No. 23 Nichol Avenue was to share with De Russey's Lane, in which the bodies were found, the morbid interest of a whole nation four years later, when the case was finally brought to trial. What actually happened in De Russey's Lane on the night of September 14th? What actually happened at 23 Nichol Avenue the same night? For the researcher, it is a matter of an involved and voluminous court record, colorful and exciting in places, confused and repetitious in others. Two things, however, stand out as sharply now as they did on the day of their telling: the pig woman's story of the people she saw in De Russey's Lane that night, and Willie Stevens' story of what went on in the house in Nichol Avenue. Willie's story, brought out in cross-examination by a prosecutor whose name you may have forgotten (it was Alexander Simpson), lacked all the gaudy melodrama of the pig woman's tale, but in it, and in the way he told it on the stand, was the real drama of the Hall-Mills trial. When the State failed miserably in its confident purpose of breaking Willie Stevens down, the verdict was already written on the wall. The rest of the trial was anticlimax. The jury that acquitted Willie, and his sister, Mrs. Frances Stevens Hall, and his brother, Henry Stevens, was out only five hours.

A detailed recital of all the fantastic events and circumstances of the Hall-Mills case would fill a large volume. If the story is vague in your mind, it is partly because its edges, even under the harsh glare of investigation, remained

curiously obscure and fuzzy. Everyone remembers, of course, that the minister was deeply involved with Mrs. Mills, who sang in his choir; their affair had been for some time the gossip of their circle. He was forty-one, she was in her early thirties; Mrs. Hall was past fifty. On the 14th of September, Mr. Hall had dinner at home with his wife, Willie Stevens, and a little niece of Mrs. Hall's. After dinner, he said, according to his wife and his brother-in-law, that he was going to call on Mrs. Mills. There was something about a payment on a doctor's bill. Mrs. Mills had had an operation and the Halls had paid for it (Mrs. Hall had inherited considerable wealth from her parents). He left the house at about the same time, it came out later, that Mrs. Mills left her house, and the two were found murdered, under a crab apple tree in De Russey's Lane, on the edge of town, some forty hours later. Around the bodies were scattered love letters which the choir singer had written to the minister. No weapons were found, but there were several cartridge shells from an automatic pistol.

The investigation that followed—marked, said one New Jersey lawyer, by “bungling stupidity”—resulted in the failure of the Grand Jury to indict anyone. Willie Stevens was questioned for hours, and so was Mrs. Hall. The pig woman told her extraordinary story of what she saw and heard in the lane that night, but she failed to impress the Grand Jurors. Four years went by, and the Hall-Mills case was almost forgotten by people outside of New Brunswick when, in a New Jersey court, one Arthur Riehl brought suit against his wife, the former Louise Geist, for annulment of their marriage. Louise Geist had been, at the time of the murders, a maid in the Hall household. Riehl said in the course of his testimony that his wife had told him “she knew all about the case but had been given \$5,000 to hold her tongue.” This was all that Mr. Philip Payne, managing editor of the *Daily Mirror*, nosing around for a big scandal of some sort, needed. His newspaper “played up” the story until finally, under its

goading, Governor Moore of New Jersey appointed Alexander Simpson special prosecutor with orders to reopen the case. Mrs. Hall and Willie Stevens were arrested and so was their brother, Henry Stevens, and a cousin, Henry de la Bruyere Carpenter.

At a preliminary hearing in Somerville the pig woman, with eager stridency, told her story again. About 9 o'clock on the night of September 14th, she heard a wagon going along Hamilton Road near the farm on which she raised her pigs. Thieves had been stealing her corn and she thought maybe they were at it again. So she saddled her mule, Jenny (soon to become the most famous quadruped in the country), and set off in grotesque pursuit. In the glare of an automobile's headlights in De Russey's Lane, she saw a woman with white hair who was wearing a tan coat, and a man with a heavy mustache, who looked like a colored man. These figures she identified as Mrs. Hall and Willie Stevens. Tying her mule to a cedar tree, she started toward the scene on foot and heard voices raised in quarrel: "Somebody said something about letters." She now saw three persons (later on she increased this to four), and a flashlight held by one of them illumined the face of a man she identified first as Henry Carpenter, later as Henry Stevens, and it "glittered on something" in the man's hand. Suddenly there was a shot, and as she turned and ran for her mule, there were three more shots; a woman's voice screamed, "Oh, my! Oh, my! Oh, my!" and the voice of another woman moaned, "Oh, Henry!" The pig woman rode wildly home on her mule, without investigating further. But she had lost one of her moccasins in her flight, and some three hours later, at 1 o'clock, she rode her mule back again to see if she could find it. This time, by the light of the moon, she saw Mrs. Hall, she said, kneeling in the lane, weeping. There was no one else there. The pig woman did not see any bodies.

Mrs. Jane Gibson became, because of her remarkable story, the chief witness for the State, as Willie Stevens was

to become the chief witness for the defense. If he and his sister were not in De Russey's Lane, as the pig woman had shrilly insisted, it remained for them to tell the detailed story of their whereabouts and their actions that night after Mr. Hall left the house. The Grand Jury this time indicted all four persons implicated by the pig woman, and the trial began on November 3rd, 1926.

The first persons Alexander Simpson called to the stand were "surprise witnesses." They were a Mr. and Mrs. John S. Dixon, who lived in North Plainfield, New Jersey, about twelve miles from New Brunswick. It soon became apparent that they were to form part of a net that Simpson was preparing to draw around Willie Stevens. They testified that at about 8:30 on the night of the murders Willie had appeared at their house, wearing a loose-fitting suit, a derby, a wing collar with bow tie, and, across his vest, a heavy gold chain to which was attached a gold watch. He had said that his sister had let him out there from her automobile and that he was trying to find the Parker Home for the Aged, which was at Bound Brook. He stuttered and he told them that he was an epileptic. They directed him to a trolley car and he went stumbling away. When Mrs. Dixon identified Willie as her visitor, she walked over to him and took his right hand and shook it vigorously, as if to wring recognition out of him. Willie stared at her, said nothing. When she returned to the stand, he grinned widely. That was one of many bizarre incidents which marked the progress of the famous murder trial. It deepened the mystery that hung about the strange figure of Willie Stevens. People could hardly wait for him to take the stand.

William Carpender Stevens had sat in court for sixteen days before he was called to the witness chair, on the 23rd of November, 1926. On that day the trial of Albert B. Fall and Edward L. Doheny, defendants in the notorious Teapot Dome scandal, opened in Washington, but the nation had eyes only for a small, crowded courtroom in Somerville,

New Jersey. Willie Stevens, after all these weeks, after all these years, was to speak out in public for the first time. As the *New York Times* said, "He had been pictured as 'Crazy Willie,' as a town character, as an oddity, as a butt for all manner of jokes. He had been compared inferentially to an animal, and the hint of an alien racial strain in his parentage had been thrown at him." Moreover, it had been prophesied that Willie would "blow up" on the stand, that he would be trapped into contradictions by the "wily" and "crafty" Alexander Simpson, that he would be tricked finally into blurting out his guilt. No wonder there was no sound in the courtroom except the heavy tread of Willie Stevens' feet as he walked briskly to the witness stand.

Willie Stevens was an ungainly, rather lumpish man, about five feet ten inches tall. Although he looked flabby, this was only because of his loose-fitting clothes and the way he wore them; despite his fifty-four years, he was a man of great physical strength. He had a large head and a face that would be hard to forget. His head was covered with a thatch of thick, bushy hair, and his heavy black eyebrows seemed always to be arched, giving him an expression of perpetual surprise. This expression was strikingly accentuated by large, prominent eyes which, seen through the thick lenses of the spectacles he always wore, seemed to bulge unnaturally. He had a heavy, drooping, walrus mustache, and his complexion was dark. His glare was sudden and fierce; his smile, which came just as quickly, lighted up his whole face and gave him the wide, beaming look of an enormously pleased child. Born in Aiken, South Carolina, Willie Stevens had been brought to New Brunswick when he was two years old. When his wealthy parents died, a comfortable trust fund was left to Willie. The other children, Frances and Henry, had inherited their money directly. Once, when Mrs. Hall was asked if it was not true that Willie was "regarded as essential to be taken care of in certain things," she replied, "In certain aspects." The quality of Willie's mentality, the

extent of his eccentricity, were matters the prosecution strove to establish on several occasions. Dr. Laurence Runyon, called by the defense to testify that Willie was not an epileptic and had never stuttered, was cross-examined by Simpson. Said the Doctor, "He may not be absolutely normal mentally, but he is able to take care of himself perfectly well. He is brighter than the average person, although he has never advanced as far in school learning as some others. He reads books that are above the average and makes a good many people look like fools." "A sort of genius, in a way, I suppose?" said Simpson. To which the Doctor quietly replied, "Yes, that is just what I mean."

There were all sorts of stories about Willie. One of them was that he had once started a fire in his back yard and then, putting on a fireman's helmet, had doused it gleefully with a pail of water. It was known that for years he had spent most of every day at the firehouse of Engine Company No. 3 in Dennis Street, New Brunswick. He played cards with the firemen, ran errands for them, argued and joked with them, and was a general favorite. Sometimes he went out and bought a steak, or a chicken, and it was prepared and eaten in the firehouse by the firemen and Willie. In the days when the engine company had been a volunteer organization, Willie was an honorary member and always carried, in the firemen's parades, a flag he had bought and presented to the firehouse, an elaborate banner costing sixty or seventy dollars. He had also bought the black-and-white bunting with which the front of the firehouse was draped whenever a member of the company died.

After his arrest, he had whiled away the time in his cell reading books on metallurgy. There was a story that when his sister-in-law, Mrs. Henry Stevens, once twitted him on his heavy reading, he said, "Oh, that is merely the bread and butter of my literary repast." The night before the trial opened, Willie's chief concern was about a new blue suit that had been ordered for him and that did not fit him to

his satisfaction. He had also lost a collar button, and that worried him; Mrs. Henry Stevens hurried to the jail before the court convened and brought him another one, and he was happy. At the preliminary hearing weeks before, Simpson had declared with brutal directness that Willie Stevens did indeed look like a colored man, as the pig woman had said. At this Willie had half risen from his chair and bared his teeth, as if about to leap on the prosecutor. But he had quickly subsided. All through the trial he had sat quietly, staring. He had been enormously interested when the pig woman, attended by a doctor and a nurse, was brought in on a stretcher to give her testimony. This was the man who now, on trial for his life, climbed into the witness chair in the courtroom at Somerville.

There was an immense stir. Justice Charles W. Parker rapped with his gavel. Mrs. Hall's face was strained and white; this was an ordeal she and her family had been dreading for weeks. Willie's left hand gripped his chair tightly, his right hand held a yellow pencil with which he had fiddled all during the trial. He faced the roomful of eyes tensely. His own lawyer, Senator Clarence E. Case, took the witness first. Willie started badly by understating his age ten years. He said he was forty-four. "Isn't it fifty-four?" asked Case. Willie gave the room his great, beaming smile. "Yes," he chortled, boyishly, as if amused by his slip. The spectators smiled. It didn't take Willie long to dispose of the Dixons, the couple who had sworn he stumbled into their house the night of the murder. He answered half a dozen questions on this point with strong emphasis, speaking slowly and clearly: he had never worn a derby, he had never had epilepsy, he had never stuttered, he had never had a gold watch and chain. Mr. Case held up Willie's old silver watch and chain for the jury to see. When he handed them back, Willie, with fine nonchalance, compared his watch with the clock on the courtroom wall, gave his sister a large, reassuring smile, and turned to his questioner with

respectful attention. He described, with technical accuracy, an old revolver of his (the murders had been done with an automatic pistol, not a revolver, but a weapon of the same caliber as Willie's). He said he used to fire off the gun on the Fourth of July; remembering these old holidays, his eyes lighted up with childish glee. From this mood he veered suddenly into indignation and anger. "When was the last time you saw the revolver?" was what set him off. "The last time I saw it was in this courthouse!" Willie almost shouted. "I think it was in October, 1922, when I was taken and put through a very severe grilling by—I cannot mention every person's name, but I remember Mr. Toolan, Mr. Lamb, and Detective David, and they did everything but strike me. They cursed me frightfully." The officers had got him into an automobile "by a subterfuge," he charged. "Mr. David said he simply wanted me to go out in the country, to ask me a very few questions, that I would not be very long." It transpired later that on this trip Willie himself had had a question to ask Detective David: would the detective, if they passed De Russey's Lane, be kind enough to point it out to him? Willie had never seen the place, he told the detective, in his life. He said that Mr. David showed him where it was.

When Willie got to the night of September 14th, 1922, in his testimony his anger and indignation were gone; he was placid, attentive, and courteous. He explained quietly that he had come home for supper that night, had gone to his room afterward, and "remained in the house, leaving it at 2:30 in the morning with my sister." Before he went to bed, he said, he had closed his door to confine to his own room the odor of tobacco smoke from his pipe. "Who objected to that?" asked Mr. Case. Willie gave his sudden, beaming grin. "Everybody," he said, and won the first of several general laughs from the courtroom. Then he told the story of what happened at 2:30 in the morning. It is necessary, for a well-rounded picture of Willie Stevens, to give it here at

some length. "I was awakened by my sister knocking at my door," said Willie, "and I immediately rose and went to the door and she said, 'I want you to come down to the church, as Edward has not come home; I am very much worried'—or words to that effect. I immediately got dressed and accompanied her down to the church. I went through the front door, followed a small path that led directly to the back of the house past the cellar door. We went directly down Redmond Street to Jones Avenue, from Jones Avenue we went to George Street; turning into George Street we went directly down to Commercial Avenue. There our movements were blocked by an immense big freight automobile. We had to wait there maybe half a minute until it went by, going toward New York.

"I am not at all sure whether we crossed right there at Commercial Avenue or went a little further down George Street and went diagonally across to the church. Then we stopped there and looked at the church to see whether there were any lights. There were no lights burning. Then Mrs. Hall said, 'We might as well go down and see if it could not be possible that he was at the Mills' house.' We went down there, down George Street until we came to Carman Street, turned down Carman Street, and got in front of the Mills' house and stood there two or three minutes to see if there were any lights in the Mills' apartment. There were none." Willie then described, street by street, the return home, and ended with "I opened the front door with my latchkey. If you wish me, I will show it to you. My sister said, 'You might as well go to bed. You can do no more good.' With that I went upstairs to bed." This was the story that Alexander Simpson had to shake. But before Willie was turned over to him, the witness told how he heard that his brother-in-law had been killed. "I remember I was in the parlor," said Willie, "reading a copy of the *New York Times*. I heard someone coming up the steps and I glanced up and I heard my aunt, Mrs. Charles J. Carpenter, say, 'Well, you might

as well know it—Edward has been shot.’” Willie’s voice was thick with emotion. He was asked what happened then. “Well,” he said, “I simply let the paper go—that way” (he let his left hand fall slowly and limply to his side) “and I put my head down, and I cried.” Mr. Case asked him if he was present at, or had anything to do with, the murder of Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills. “Absolutely nothing at all!” boomed Willie, coming out of his posture of sorrow, belligerently erect. The attorney for the defense turned, with a confident little bow, to Alexander Simpson. The special prosecutor sauntered over and stood in front of the witness. Willie took in his breath sharply.

Alexander Simpson, a lawyer, a state senator, slight, perky, capable of harsh tongue-lashings, given to sarcasm and innuendo, had intimated that he would “tie Willie Stevens into knots.” Word had gone around that he intended to “flay” the eccentric fellow. Hence his manner now came as a surprise. He spoke in a gentle, almost inaudible voice, and his attitude was one of solicitous friendliness. Willie, quite unexpectedly, drew first blood. Simpson asked him if he had ever earned his livelihood. “For about four or five years,” said Willie, “I was employed by Mr. Siebold, a contractor.” Not having anticipated an affirmative reply, Simpson paused. Willie leaned forward and said, politely, “Do you wish his address?” He did this in good faith, but the spectators took it for what the *Times* called a “sally,” because Simpson had been in the habit of letting loose a swarm of investigators on anyone whose name was brought into the case. “No, thank you,” muttered Simpson, above a roar of laughter. The prosecutor now set about picking at Willie’s story of the night of September 14th: he tried to find out why the witness and his sister had not knocked on the Mills’ door to see if Mr. Hall were there. Unfortunately for the steady drumming of questions, Willie soon broke the prosecutor up with another laugh. Simpson had occasion to mention a New Brunswick boarding house called The Bay-

ard, and he pronounced "Bay" as it is spelled. With easy politeness, Willie corrected him. "*Biyard*," said Willie. "*Biyard*?" repeated Simpson. Willie smiled, as at an apt pupil. Simpson bowed slightly. The spectators laughed again.

Presently the witness made a slip, and Simpson pounced on it like a stooping falcon. Asked if he had not, at the scene of the murder, stood "in the light of an automobile while a woman on a mule went by," Willie replied, "I never remember that occurrence." Let us take up the court record from there. "Q.—You would remember if it occurred, wouldn't you? A.—I certainly would, but I don't remember of ever being in an automobile and the light from the automobile shone on a woman on a mule. Q.—Do you say you were not there, or you don't remember? A.—I say positively I was not there. Q.—Why did you say you don't *remember*? A.—Does not that cover the same thing? Q.—No, it don't, because you might be there and not remember it. A.—Well, I will withdraw that, if I may, and say I was not there positively." Willie assumed an air of judicial authority as he "withdrew" his previous answer, and he spoke his positive denial with sharp decision. Mr. Simpson abruptly tried a new tack. "You have had a great deal of experience in life, Mr. Stevens," he said, "and have read a great deal, they say, and know a lot about human affairs. Don't you think it sounds rather fishy when you say you got up in the middle of the night to go and look for Dr. Hall and went to the house and never even knocked on the door—with your experience of human affairs and people that you met and all that sort of thing—don't that seem rather fishy to you?" There was a loud bickering of attorneys before Willie could say anything to this. Finally Judge Parker turned to the witness and said, "Can you answer that, Mr. Stevens?" "The only way I can answer it, Your Honor," said Willie, scornfully, "is that I don't see that it is at all 'fishy.'" The prosecutor jumped to something else: "Dr. Hall's church was not your church, was it?" he asked. "He was not a *Doctor*, sir,"

said Willie, once more the instructor. "He was the Reverend *Mister* Hall." Simpson paused, nettled. "I am glad you corrected me on that," he said. The courtroom laughed again.

The prosecutor now demanded that Willie repeat his story of what happened at 2:30 A.M. He hoped to establish, he intimated, that the witness had learned it "by rote." Willie calmly went over the whole thing again, in complete detail, but no one of his sentences was the same as it had been. The prosecutor asked him to tell it a third time. The defense objected vehemently. Simpson vehemently objected to the defense's objection. The Court: "We will let him tell it once more." At this point Willie said, "May I say a word?" "Certainly," said Simpson. "Say all you want." Weighing his words carefully, speaking with slow emphasis, Willie said, "All I have to say is I was never taught, as you insinuate, by any person whatsoever. That is my best recollection from the time I started out with my sister to this present minute." Simpson did not insist further on a third recital. He wanted to know now how Willie could establish the truth of his statement that he was in his room from 8 or 9 o'clock until his sister knocked on the door at 2:30 A.M. "Why," said Willie, "if a person sees me go upstairs and does not see me come downstairs, isn't that a conclusion that I was in my room?" The court record shows that Mr. Simpson replied, "Absolutely." "Well," said Willie expansively, "that is all there was to it." Nobody but the pig woman had testified to seeing Willie after he went up to his room that night. Barbara Tough, a servant who had been off during the day, testified that she got back to the Hall home about 10 o'clock and noticed that Willie's door was closed (Willie had testified that it wouldn't stay closed unless he locked it). Louise Geist, of the annulment suit, had testified that she had not seen Willie that night after dinner. It was Willie's story against the pig woman's. That day in court he overshadowed her. When he stepped down from the witness chair, his shoulders were back and he was smiling broadly. Headlines

in the *Times* the next day said, "Willie Stevens Remains Calm Under Cross-Examination. Witness a Great Surprise." There was a touch of admiration, almost of partisanship, in most of the reporters' stories. The final verdict could be read between the lines. The trial dragged on for another ten days, but on the 3rd of December, Willie Stevens was a free man.

He was glad to get home. He stood on the porch of 23 Nichol Avenue, beaming at the house. Reporters had followed him there. He turned to them and said, solemnly, "It is one hundred and four days since I've been here. And I want to get in." They let him go. But two days later, on a Sunday, they came back and Mrs. Hall received them in the drawing room. They could hear Willie in an adjoining room, talking spiritedly. He was, it came out, discussing metallurgy with the Rev. J. Mervin Pettit, who had succeeded Mr. Hall as rector of the Church of St. John the Evangelist.

Willie Stevens, going on seventy, no longer visits the firehouse of No. 3 Engine Company, His old friends have caught only glimpses of him in the past few years, for he has been in feeble health, and spends most of his time in his room, going for a short ride now and then in his chauffeur-driven car. The passerby, glancing casually into the car, would not recognize the famous figure of the middle 1920's. Willie has lost a great deal of weight, and the familiar beaming light no longer comes easily to his eyes.

After Willie had been acquitted and sent home, he tried to pick up the old routine of life where he had left it, but people turned to stare after him in the street, and boys were forever at his heels, shouting, "Look out, Willie, Simpson is after you!" The younger children were fond of him and did not tease him, and once in a while Willie could be seen playing with them, as boisterously and whimsically as ever. The firemen say that if he encountered a ragged child he would find out where it lived, and then give one of his friends the money to buy new clothes for it. But Willie's adventures in the streets of the town became fewer and

farther apart. Sometimes months would elapse between his visits to the firehouse. When he did show up in his old haunts, he complained of headaches, and while he was still in his fifties, he spent a month in bed with a heart ailment. After that, he stayed close to home, and the firemen rarely saw him. If you should drop by the firehouse, and your interest in Willie seems friendly, they will tell you some fond stories about him.

One winter Willie took a Cook's tour to Hawaii. When he came back, he told the firemen he had joined an organization which, for five dollars, gave its subscribers a closer view of the volcanoes than the ordinary tourist could get. Willie was crazy about the volcanoes. His trip, however, was spoiled, it came out, because someone recognized and pointed him out as the famous Willie Stevens of the Hall-Mills case. He had the Cook's agent cancel a month's reservation at a hotel and rearrange his schedule so that he could leave on the next ship. He is infuriated by any reference to the murders or to the trial. Some years ago a newspaper printed a paragraph about a man out West who was "a perfect double for Willie Stevens." Someone in the firehouse showed it to Willie and he tore the paper to shreds in a rage.


Willie still spends a great deal of time reading "heavy books"—on engineering, on entomology, on botany. Those who have seen his famous room at 23 Nichol Avenue—he has a friend in to visit him once in a while—say that it is filled with books. He has no use for detective stories or the Western and adventure magazines his friends the firemen read. When he is not reading scientific tomes, he dips into the classics or what he calls the "worth-while poets." He used to astound the firemen with his wide range of knowledge. There was the day a salesman of shaving materials dropped in at the enginehouse. Finding that Willie had visited St. Augustine, Florida, he mentioned an old Spanish chapel there. Willie described it and gave its history, re-

plete with dates, and greatly impressed the caller. Another time someone mentioned a certain kind of insect which he said was found in this country. "You mean they used to be," said Willie. "That type of insect has been extinct in this country for forty years." It turned out that it had been, too. On still another occasion Willie fell to discussing flowers with some visitor at the firehouse and reeled off a Latin designation—*crassinae carduaceae*, or something of the sort. Then he turned, grinning, to the listening firemen. "Zinnias to you," he said.

Willie Stevens' income from the trust fund established for him is said to be around forty dollars a week. His expenditures are few, now that he is no longer able to go on long trips. The firemen like especially to tell about the time that Willie went to Wyoming, and attended a rodeo. He told the ticket-seller he wanted to sit in a box and the man gave him a single ticket. Willie explained that he wanted the whole box to himself, and he planked down a ten-dollar bill for it. Then he went in and sat in the box all alone. "I had a hell of a time!" he told the firemen gleefully when he came back home.

De Russey's Lane, which Detective David once pointed out to Willie Stevens, is now, you may have heard, entirely changed. Several years ago it was renamed Franklin Boulevard, and where the Rev. Mr. Edward W. Hall and Mrs. Eleanor Mills lay murdered there is now a row of neat brick and stucco houses. The famous crab apple tree under which the bodies were found disappeared the first weekend after the murders. It was hacked to pieces, roots and all, by souvenir-hunters.

Belle of Indiana



S T E W A R T H . H O L B R O O K

HAD it not been for an unfortunate hired man and a fire, Belle Brynhilde Poulsatter Sorenson Gunness might have been in business to this day; and a very profitable and interesting line it must have been. She was an extremely retiring and uncommunicative person and until fire destroyed her home near La Porte, Indiana, on April 28, 1908, she was practically unknown except to a circle of what one shudders to call her intimates.

Belle first appeared in La Porte in 1901. She was then the Widow Sorenson, relict of Mads Sorenson who died in 1900 leaving her with two children and eight thousand dollars in life insurance. From sale of the Sorenson home in Illinois the widow received another five thousand dollars. Thus she was financially well fixed when she bought a forty-eight-acre farm about a mile out of La Porte and moved there with two children of her own and another youngster, Jennie Olson, daughter of one Antone Olson.

The Widow Sorenson was forty-two years old in 1901.* Neighbors describe her as "rugged," which would seem wholly inadequate. She was five feet seven inches tall and weighed two hundred pounds, most of which was pure brawn. When her household effects arrived at the farm, the truckers were amazed at the ease with which she juggled

* She was born Brynhilde Poulsatter at Selbe, Norway, in 1859, and came to the United States in 1868. Her first marriage was in 1883.

heavy trunks, boxes, and crates. One of them, who may have been drinking that day, swore that he saw the woman pick the big upright piano clean off the floor of the porch, lug it unaided into the front room, and set it down as gently as she would have handled a basket of eggs. "Ay like music in home," Belle had beamed.

"Weigh three hunnert pound, easy," the awed trucker said later, referring to the piano.

In spite of her retiring disposition, neighbors soon learned that the Widow Sorenson was an accomplished farmer who could pitch hay and milk cows and who did her own butchering of hogs and calves, the meat of which she sold in La Porte. She wasn't a widow long. How they first met isn't clear; but in April of 1902 she married Peter Gunness, a Norwegian who seemed to be a jolly, honest person and became well liked by neighboring farmers. But Peter wasn't long for the world. In December, after only seven months of wedded bliss, he was killed when, as Mrs. Gunness explained the matter, he was struck on the head by a sausage grinder that fell from a shelf.

It is of course idle to speculate on whether or not the shelf had been jiggled. The La Porte coroner was called and, although later he admitted that the sausage-grinder affair "looked a little queer," he found officially that Peter Gunness, God rest his soul, had been the victim of an accident.

The Widow Gunness, who henceforth was known as Belle Gunness, was no doubt glad of the four-thousand-dollar life-insurance policy which the oddly animated sausage machine had liquidated. But she continued to live modestly, even frugally, and it soon became apparent that in spite of her forty-three years Belle was in an interesting condition. A son whom she named Philip was born in 1903. In addition, her brood included Daughters Lucy and Myrtle by her previous marriage and the Jennie Olson she was caring for.*

Although it was not known until later—tragically later—

* I dislike to use the term "caring for" in connection with *anything* in which Mrs. Gunness was concerned, but it must suffice for the present.

Belle Gunness was addicted to the use of matrimonial journals.* That is, she advertised in them—listing, as was the custom, her desire for a good husband and being not too coy regarding her own personality and qualifications. What Belle wanted, it seemed, was a man of Scandinavian birth, preferably Norwegian, who was kind and honest and who would help a lovable and hard-working widow to lift the mortgage on her little farm. The “kind and honest” part of the desired man’s qualifications might be winked at, one gathers; but the mortgage-lifting end of the deal was nothing short of imperative. “Triflers,” Belle’s advertisement said coldly, “need not apply.”

A photograph of Belle Gunness at this period shows a squat, powerfully built woman in a long plain dress with puff sleeves, a Gibson Girl hair-do, and an exceedingly dull and heavy face. Looking at the photograph, one is hard put to explain the undoubted attraction the woman exercised on a large number of men. To term the woman in this photograph “plain” is mere flattery. But either this picture is a gross libel on Belle or her personal charm was such that no photograph could catch and hold it.

Shortly after the death of Mr. Gunness, Belle engaged a hired man to work around her place; but she herself was still active in butchering pigs, of which she had many, and in caring for the garden. The hired men changed from time to time, some of them very suddenly indeed; but none of them entered Belle’s life very deeply until the next to last one, of which more later.

In 1906 a Mr. John Moo arrived at Belle’s farm from

* Matrimonial journals are still flourishing in the United States, but today they usually operate under euphemisms such as “correspondence clubs” and “acquaintance societies.” In former times they came right out with it and used *Wedding Bells* and other direct-action names. Any male could get a copy free and there read all about the wondrous charms of the ladies as described by themselves. But to get the names and addresses of these jewels the boys had to pay—six for a dollar. I once knew a lumberjack who got a very good wife by mail order. I also knew a farm hand who got a frightful witch in the same manner and was forced to strangle her to regain his peace of mind.

Elbow Lake, Minnesota. He was a husky, good-looking man of about fifty years of age, well dressed by country-town standards, and a native of Norway. His object was matrimony, and he had been fetched by one of Belle's advertisements in the wedding-bells periodicals. With him John Moo brought one thousand dollars to "pay off the mortgage" on his intended's farm.

John was introduced to callers and neighbors as Cousin John, and for almost a week he was seen about the house every day. Then, one day, he wasn't there. That was thirty-five years ago. John Moo hasn't been seen since.

Hard on the heels of the disappearing Moo came George Anderson of Tarkio, a village in the northwestern corner of Missouri. George, like both Peter Gunness and John Moo, was a native of Norway. Living in Missouri must have given him some of the skepticism for which that state is famous: George Anderson did not bring very much money with him to Belle's place.

He was mighty glad he hadn't. Long afterward he related why.

Attracted by Belle's description of herself in one of the marriage papers, Anderson had made the long trip to La Porte with the intention of matrimony. After the usual amenities—and by now Belle must have been getting pretty good at amenities—the woman brought up the little matter of raising the mortgage. Really charmed by the husky Belle, George was seriously considering returning home to get what might be termed the entrance fee and then marrying the woman.

Early on his visit at the farm, however, he suddenly awoke in the middle of the night. "All in a cold sweat," he recalled. Bending over him and peering intently into his face was Belle herself, a lighted candle in her hand. What she intended to do, if anything, George Anderson never found out. He was so startled at the odd expression in the eyes and on the usually phlegmatic face of his intended bride that he let

go a yell. Belle ran out of the room. So did George. He put on his clothes and got the hell out of there as fast as he could go, and kept going until he reached the La Porte railroad station, on foot, where he got a train for Tarkio, Missouri.

After Anderson's departure there *may* have been a lull, a sort of brief hiatus, between the arrivals of men with matrimonial intentions. Again, there may have been no break at all. It is difficult to say. In any case, Belle was not idle. She changed her advertising copy in the wedding-bells journals, and she also engaged a new hired man—a rather dim-witted young French-Canadian by name of Ray L'Amphere, who presently anglicized his name into plain Lamphere. What his relations with Belle were, other than as hired man, are not positively known; but probably they were rather interesting, as events were soon to indicate.

Either just before or just after Lamphere came to live and work at the farm, young Jennie Olson, the sixteen-year-old girl who had been put in Belle's care by the child's father, Antone Olson, disappeared. Possibly "disappeared" is too strong a word to use at this point, for Belle explained everything to neighbors. Jennie had "gone to California," she said, and was in school there. It certainly is a fact that Jennie went somewhere in midsummer of 1906. That was thirty-five years ago. She hasn't been seen since.

During the lull in the mortgage-raising Belle began to be something of a mystery woman in the neighborhood. Hack drivers of La Porte told of delivering trunks to the Gunness farm at night. One of the drivers was Clyde Sturgis. One night he drove out there with a big, heavy trunk which was well bound with rope. Sturgis, always a helpful man, unloaded the trunk and started to cut the rope with his jack-knife. Belle was at him in a fury. "What are you trying to do!" she fairly screamed. "I'll take care of this trunk." And with that she picked it up off the porch like a box of marshmallows and lugged it inside.

Added to the business of the mysterious trunks, which

doubtless became more mysterious every time it was retold, was that neighbors noted Belle kept the shutters on her house tightly drawn, both day and night, for a long period. And farmers going by late at night often saw Belle herself on the prowl, around her barn or in a small yard some fifty by seventy-five feet which Belle had recently enclosed with an *eight-foot* fence of stout and fine wire mesh. Entrance to this yard was by a rugged gate of tough oak which rumor said was always locked and to which Belle alone had the key.

The cellar of the house, too, was always kept locked except at hog-butcher season. At these times a stray neighbor or two had happened to call when Belle was in the cellar, her sleeves rolled up, wielding knife and cleaver like the best man Mr. Swift or Mr. Armour ever had. The cellar was admirably rigged for such work. It contained a long heavy table of hardwood, twelve inches thick, and a large tub for scalding purposes. In the ceiling over the tub was a hook and pulley. Leather strips along the wall held a professional assortment of fine butcher's implements.

The lull in the stream of callers—if lull there was—came to an end in April of 1907. In that merry spring month Mr. Ole Budsberg, a native of Norway but long a citizen of Iola in Waupaca County, Wisconsin, packed his extension suitcase and took a train of steamcars for La Porte. Belle met him at the station in her own buggy. The loving couple had long since exchanged photographs, as is the happy custom in mail-order matrimonial circles, and they had no trouble recognizing each other.*

Mr. Ole Budsberg was a middle-aged man, the father of several grown sons. He had done very well with certain logging jobs in the white pine of Wisconsin and had saved his money. With him to La Porte he brought two thousand

* You can say what you want to about Belle, but not that she ever attempted to seduce men by retouched pictures; the ones she sent out to prospective mates looked cruelly like her.

dollars in cash. This was, as one might guess, for the purpose of raising that apparently immutable mortgage on the forty-eight acres of the Widow Gunness.

Mr. Budsberg arrived on the farm late in April of 1907. That is thirty-four years ago and he hasn't been seen since.

2

Nineteen hundred and seven had been a rather slow year at the farm, but 1908 opened very auspiciously indeed when Mr. Andrew K. Helgelein arrived at the place in January and was made welcome by the charming chatelaine of what soon was to be known as Abattoir Acres. Mr. Helgelein was a native of Norway, but for years past he had been living near Aberdeen, South Dakota, where he successfully raised wheat.

Mr. Helgelein came with the most honorable intentions of matrimony. In his big wallet he carried no less than three thousand dollars in cash, with which to—but never mind. What had fetched him was obviously a series of letters, the last one of which happily has survived to give a good sample of Belle's literary style and general technique. It was written in Belle's own clear hand on January 13, 1908, and was inadvertently but fortunately left at his South Dakota home by Mr. Helgelein when he started for La Porte. Wrote the Belle of Indiana:

To the Dearest Friend in the World: No woman in the world is happier than I am. I know that you are now to come to me and be my own. I can tell from your letters that you are the man I want. It does not take one long to tell when to like a person, and you I like better than anyone in the world, I know.

Think how we will enjoy each other's company. You, the sweetest man in the whole world. We will be all alone with each other. Can you conceive of anything nicer? I think of you constantly. When I hear your name mentioned, and this is when one of the dear children speaks of you or I hear myself humming it with the words of an old love song, it is beautiful music to my ears.

My heart beats in wild rapture for you. My Andrew, I love you. Come prepared to stay forever.

And, by God, he did. That was thirty-three years ago and he hasn't been seen since.

Now affairs at the farm departed from their usual humdrum quiet. Ray Lamphere, the hired man, had a frightful quarrel with Belle. He, like many another poor man, had fallen in love with her and he was jealous of the latest star boarder, Helgelein. In a terrible temper he packed up his belongings and left. In La Porte he told friends that Belle owed him back wages. He said he knew enough about Belle to make her pay him not only his wages but to keep his mouth shut, too.

Lamphere must have done a deal of talking, for it got to Belle's ears. She promptly had him arrested on complaint that he was insane and a menace to the public. He was given what passed in those days for a sanity hearing and was found sane. He made a call on Belle at the farm. They argued heatedly about something. She had him arrested again, for trespass.

Lamphere was a man who could take it. He paid a fine for trespass and he remained in the neighborhood. It is even thought that he called on Belle again. He also continued to make various veiled threats about her, and once mentioned to Farmer William Slater that "Helgelein won't bother me no more. We fixed him for keeps."

Trouble also assailed Belle from another quarter. She got a letter from Mr. Asle Helgelein, a substantial citizen of Mansfield, South Dakota, who wanted to know what had become of his brother Andrew. Belle wrote in reply that Andrew had gone away, doubtless on a visit to his native Norway. To this whimsey Asle Helgelein answered that he was positive his brother had done no such thing.

Now we get a real sample of how Belle met a challenge of this sort. She sat right down and wrote Asle that she wished he would come to La Porte to aid her in a search for An-

drew. She intimated, too, that searches of this kind cost money. If Asle replied to this invitation it is not of record.

For once in her life Belle Gunness was worried. Or so she seemed to M. E. Leliter, prominent attorney of La Porte, to whom the woman came on April 27, 1908. She told him she was mortally in fear of Ray Lamphere, the ex-hired man. He had threatened to kill her, she said. He had promised to burn her house around her ears. In view of these things hanging over her she wanted to make her will. It is significant, perhaps, that she did not ask for police protection from Lamphere.

Attorney Leliter drew up a will and she signed it. It left her estate to her two children by the late Mr. Sorenson and her one child by the late Mr. Gunness. In case the children did not survive her, the estate was to go to a Norwegian children's home, a sort of orphanage, in Chicago.

Leaving Mr. Leliter's office, Belle proceeded to the La Porte bank—where she paid off a five-hundred-dollar note. Then she returned to the farm.

Early next morning farmers on the McClung Road saw the Gunness home in flames. It burned to the ground. Only the hired man, one Joe Maxon, escaped, and he said he barely made it. Noise of the flames licking at his room had awakened him, he said, and he jumped out his second-story window in his underwear. He vowed that just before jumping he had shouted loudly to wake Mrs. Gunness and the children but had received no reply. They had been in the house when he went to bed.

When the embers had cooled slightly, searchers found four bodies. Three were readily identified as those of Lucy and Myrtle Sorenson, Belle's daughters, and of Philip Gunness, her son. The other corpse was the headless body of a woman. All four were found on a mattress in the cellar. On top of them were the charred remains of the pride of Belle's parlor, the fine upright piano.

Sheriff Albert H. Smutzer was called. He viewed the scene

and arrested Ray Lamphere, the farm hand who had been doing so much talking about Mrs. Gunness. Immediately upon his arrest and without so much as one question asked him, Lamphere asked one of his own. "Did Widow Gunness and the kids get out?" he inquired.

But Lamphere denied any knowledge of how the fire started, even when he was confronted by John Solyam, a neighbor's boy, who identified Lamphere as the man he had seen running from the Gunness place just before the flames were noticed. "You wouldn't look me in the eye and say that," Lamphere asserted.

"Yes, I will," the lad said, and continued, "You found me hiding behind the bushes and you told me you'd kill me if I didn't get out of there."

Lamphere was indicted for murder; and a charge of arson was left, as you might say, hanging over him, just in case the other charge wasn't sufficient. The victim named in the murder charge was of course Mrs. Gunness. But, and the doubts began piling up one on top of the other, *was* the headless body that of Mrs. Gunness?

Swan Nicholson, neighboring farmer who had known Mrs. Gunness over a period of six years, viewed the headless corpse and said, without qualification, no, it wasn't that of the hefty widow. It wasn't tall enough, it wasn't big enough, and, well, it just didn't look like her at all. C. Christofferson, another farmer who had often called at the mystery place to do plowing and other work, was as positive as Nicholson had been. No, he said, that body had never been Belle. And so said Mrs. Austin Cutler, an old acquaintance.

From Chicago came Mrs. Nellie Olander and Mr. Sigurd Olson, sister and brother of the Jennie Olson who had lived with Belle and had "gone to California" not long before. Mrs. Olander and Mr. Olson told authorities they had known Belle ever since they could remember and that the headless body was of someone else, not Belle.

A tragic visitor at this time was Antone Olson, father of

the missing girl. He came from Chicago to view the charred bodies. Jennie's was not among them. Mr. Olson told police he had planned to visit the Gunness home on the following Sunday to see if Jennie was all right. He said he had dreamed a few nights before that the Gunness home had been burned to the ground and Jennie was in the fire. It had worried him.

Physicians measured the charred remains of the headless woman. Making proper allowances for the missing head and neck, they concluded that the corpse was that of a woman five feet three inches tall and weighing about one hundred and fifty pounds. Belle, as those who knew her agreed, had not been a hair under five feet seven and weighed at least one hundred and eighty-five pounds, possibly more. Swan Nicholson was quite definite. The Widow Gunness, he said with sober assurance, weighed two hundred pounds if she weighed an ounce.

Clerks in La Porte stores who had sold Mrs. Gunness various articles of wearing apparel were interviewed for their knowledge of clothing sizes. These figures were compared with estimates of acquaintances. Physicians had meanwhile made careful measurements of the corpse. The two sets of measurements, one real, the other estimated, indicated that the body found in the cellar must be that of someone other than Belle. This is how they compared:

	Victim (inches)	Mrs. Gunness (inches)
Biceps	9	17
Bust	36	46
Waist	26	37
Thigh	25	30
Hips	40	54
Calf	12½	14
Wrist	6	9

Despite these discrepancies and admitting they would like to have more definite proof, police authorities said the head-

less corpse was that of Belle Gunness. Three rings on the left hand were considered additional proof. One was set with diamonds and had no markings. A plain band was engraved "M.S. to J.S. Aug. 22 '94"; another gold band was marked "P.G. to J.S. 3-5-'95." It was reasonable to believe that these rings had to do with Belle's first marriage, to Mads Sorenson, and her second, to Peter Gunness. Because of the condition of the flesh it was impossible to say if these rings had been on these fingers for a long time.

Presently, as in all such cases of doubt, there came forward those witnesses who are apparently present, in swarming numbers, when any skulduggery has come to light. Half a dozen persons volunteered the information that they had seen Mrs. Gunness driving a woman to the farm on the night of the fire. Descriptions of this mysterious party varied from "slim" to "fairly stout." All agreed she had been "a dark woman."

What the harassed authorities needed was a head for the corpse, or a least a skull. Search of the barns and outbuildings and of the near-by swamp revealed nothing in the form of a head. The sheriff was prepared to call it a day—to let the whole confusing matter rest as it was and to go ahead with prosecution of the farm hand, Lamphere, for murder of Mrs. Gunness. Doubtless that is exactly what would have happened had it not been for the appearance on the scene of Asle Helgelein of Mansfield, South Dakota. This was the brother of Andrew, the man Belle had reported to Asle as on his happy way to Norway. Asle had not known of the Gunness fire until his arrival at La Porte. He had come simply to find his brother.

Asle went to Sheriff Smutzer with his suspicions that Andrew had somehow been done in by this woman he had come to marry. The sheriff didn't seem very interested, but Asle was persistent and the sheriff finally agreed to make another inspection of the premises. In the high-fenced yard, the gate to which had to be broken by police, were noted

several soft depressions in the ground. Joe Maxon, Belle's last hired man, the one who barely had escaped from the burning house, told officers that Belle once had him wheel dirt into the yard to level the partly filled holes. Contained rubbish, Belle had said. At the urging of Asle Helgelein deputies took shovels and started digging.

The first layers under the soft earth were indeed rubbish—old cans, bottles, and so forth—but suddenly a digger let out an exclamation. He came up with a good fat gunny sack. In it was a body well hacked but still in fair condition, everything considered. Helgelein looked closely at the remains. "That's Andy," he said.

The deputies now dug with a right good will. Before sundown that day, which was May 3, 1908, they had uncovered the remains of at least four more bodies. One of these was identified as that of Jennie Olson, the girl who "had gone to California." One of the others was of a tall man with a dark mustache. The two others were of children.

Next day the yard yielded four more bodies. On the third day only one body was found. That made a total of ten in the yard. If the four in the cellar were added, the grand total was fourteen—an impressive number for so small a farm.

When he was informed of the bodies found in the yard, Lamphere, the ex-hired man, screamed in his cell. "Bodies, murder, Helgelein!" was his curious cry. "My God, that woman! Now I know what was going on!"

Not all of the bodies could be identified, but positive identifications were made of those of Jennie Olson, Andrew Helgelein, John Moo, and Ole Budsberg. For reasons that need not be gone into here, three other bodies were presently presumed to be those of one Olaf Lindblom and one Eric Gerhalt, both Norwegians who had come, separately, to visit Belle, and that of a hired man whose name was never known.

The remains of several *other* bodies were mere fragments—fingers and other small bones for which comparative skulls

and trunks were missing. As physicians attempted to sort the hundreds of spare parts, the heavy table and the vat in the Gunness cellar took on a possible new meaning that made strong men shudder. Had that vat been used for purposes other than the scalding of hogs? One couldn't know, but police and physicians now looked at the several cleavers found in the ashes with new interest.

With Belle's private boneyard apparently exhausted, police felt that the investigation was completed—finished. They hadn't reckoned with the growing public rumor about that headless corpse and its possible connection with the mystery woman seen with Belle in her buggy on the night of the fire. New witnesses came forward. They had seen this same dark woman get off the evening train from Chicago. Belle had met her at the La Porte depot. They had driven out the McClung road together, toward the farm.

Maybe so, but Joe Maxon, Belle's final hired man, had seen no strange woman that night, although he admitted it was possible one could have been in the house without his knowledge. "It sure was a queer place," he allowed in what was a fair attempt at an understatement.

No matter what Joe Maxon said, local opinion had it settled that the headless corpse was that of a woman the crafty Belle had imported to the farm for just such a purpose. Belle herself was safe elsewhere, somewhere. So the story grew and solidified.

Dr. Ira P. Norton, La Porte dentist, had been very busy at the time of the Gunness fire and had not then connected the fire with a former patient. With the Gunness farm and its odd harvest now on the front pages of the nation's press, Dr. Norton recalled that he had done some dental work for the late Mrs. Gunness. He told police he could easily identify his own work, which was a bridge of gold and porcelain.

Police doubted Dr. Norton would have anything to work on. They said that fire hot enough to consume a head would

also consume, or at least melt, both gold and porcelain. Not so, said Dr. Norton. The gold caps would not fuse under 1800 degrees Fahrenheit. The porcelain would not disintegrate at less than 2000 degrees. "That would call for a blow-pipe flame," the dentist said.

The next problem was how to sift the ashes and debris of a large house and find a few small teeth—even if they existed, which the police seemed to doubt. Louis Schultz, a public-spirited citizen of La Porte, heard of the quandary and went to the officers with a suggestion. He was an old sourdough, he said, not long since returned from the Yukon, and if he had a little lumber and some encouragement he would build a regular gold-mine sluice box right there on Belle's place. With plenty of running water handy he would sluice every jeasley bit of stuff in the ruins of the house, and if there was any gold to be found in the claim he damned well would find it.

This Louis Schultz was plainly God-given. The sluice was built in Belle's front yard; water was piped from the barn; and old Klondike Louis, the ninety-eightier, went to work on the strangest mining job of his career, while thousands cheered.

The thousands who cheered Louis at his work came not only from La Porte and surrounding towns but from Chicago, where the daily papers were whooping up the biggest story of the year and one of the best horror stories of all time. Klondike Louis, indeed, was a sensation. With his sluice box roped off and scores of extra deputies needed to handle the huge crowds, he shoveled tons of debris and washed it down over the riffles before the largest audience a sourdough ever had. At that time newsreels were in infancy and seem not to have caught the epic event; but newspaper photographers were all over the place, catching Louis in pose after pose.

Bets were made on the outcome. Chicago bookies formed

pools on the day and hour Louis would strike pay dirt in the Belle Gunness Mine. Vendors of popcorn and tonic circulated in the crowd, which on its peak day was estimated to be six thousand persons. On May 19, after four days of hard work, Klondike Louis struck the vein. Washed out from the muck and debris of the house was a piece of dental bridge-work containing two lower bicuspid caps capped with gold, and four porcelain teeth between them.

Dr. Norton looked closely. "My work, positively," he said. "Those are Mrs. Gunness' teeth."

3

In November, Ray Lamphere, the ex-farm hand, went on trial in La Porte for the murder of Mrs. Gunness. He was ably defended by Wirt Worden and was acquitted. Tried for arson, he was convicted. Obviously the jury did not believe Mrs. Gunness was dead. Lamphere was sent to prison at Michigan City, where he died in 1909.

Before his death Lamphere told a long and sometimes disconnected story of his affairs with Mrs. Gunness to a trusty at the prison by name of Harry Myers, and after Lamphere's death Myers retold it to prison officials. High lights of this account were that Belle did *not* die in the fire. Despite the evidence of the dental work, the body was that of a woman Belle had lured from Illinois on the promise of housework, then killed and beheaded to preclude identification. The head had been destroyed by use of quicklime, "in a hole dug in the swamp."

Lamphere painted a horrible picture of the female monster on the prowl. With the stand-in woman butchered, Belle went methodically to work on her own three children, killing them one after the other with practiced hand, then piled the four bodies onto the mattress after dressing the woman's in some old clothes that would readily be recognized as Belle's clothing.

In all, Lamphere said, Belle had lured forty-two men to her house.* Only one had escaped, presumably the alert George Anderson of Tarkio, Missouri, who had awaked to find Belle standing over his bed peering into his face so intently.

From her dupes Belle had got amounts of cash varying from one thousand dollars to thirty-two thousand dollars each, Lamphere said. Usually she first drugged their coffee, then bashed in their heads while they were in a stupor. She then dissected the bodies on the big table in the cellar, tied the parts into neat bundles, and buried them in the locked yard. On occasion she varied the monotony by putting the bodies into the hog-scalding vat and adding generous amounts of quicklime.

Lamphere admitted to Myers that he had helped Belle bury "several bodies" but denied he ever had a part in the killing. Jennie Olson had been killed because "she knew too much." It was the same with Belle's own children. The other unidentified children had been put in Belle's care by mothers or fathers of broken homes.

As for the late Peter Gunness, alleged victim of the bounding sausage grinder, Belle had killed him with an ax.†

Not all of the dying Lamphere's story made sense. No doubt it was also grossly exaggerated. Some of it was sheer fantasy. And he was oddly silent regarding his own relations with Mrs. Gunness. But on the subject of the headless corpse he was positive; it was not Belle. She was safely away.

And that is the opinion today of many oldsters around La

* I was immensely relieved to come across this figure "forty-two" in the record. There is something magic about forty-two in connection with apocryphal accounts of murders in series. Folklore has it, for instance, that Harry Orchard killed forty-two men; that Billy Gohl of Grays Harbor, Washington, killed forty-two; that Lydia Sherman of Connecticut accounted for a similar number.

† This part of Lamphere's story was given weight when a youngster of La Porte recalled having heard little Myrtle Sorenson, Belle's daughter, remark that "Mama brained Papa with an ax. Don't tell a soul."

Porte, who believe that Belle, who left only a small amount in her bank account, had killed the unknown woman, fired the house, and left for other parts.

On a somewhat different plane Belle lives on just as Ambrose Bierce, the old journalist, did for many years in spite of his probable death in Mexico in 1916. As recently as 1931 Belle was "seen" in a Mississippi town. In the same year the body of a woman found in Los Angeles was thought to be hers. It wasn't. For more than twenty years the sheriff's office at La Porte received an average of two queries a month about Belle—Belle the Hoosier Monster, the Queen of the Abattoir, the Female Bluebeard. During the past decade the queries have been fewer, but they continue.

Belle Gunness, in fact, seems assured of an enduring place in the folklore of the region. I base this guess on the fact that she is the subject of at least one ballad, and when a person or an event gets into song it is not likely to be forgotten as soon as one not in a ballad. The literary or musical merit of the ballad has nothing at all to do with its lasting qualities, as witness the doggerel about Jesse James, Jim Fisk, Floyd Collins, and other folk heroes.

The ballad about Belle I heard sung to the air of "Love, O Careless Love," and the verses I have been able to unearth are as follows:

Belle Gunness lived in In-di-an;
She always, always had a man;
Ten at least went in her door—
And were never, never seen no more.

Now, all these men were Norska folk
Who came to Belle from Minn-e-sote;
They liked their coffee, and their gin:
They got it—plus a mickey finn.

And now with cleaver poised so sure
Belle neatly cut their jug-u-lur [sic];
She put them in a bath of lime,
And left them there for quite some time.

There's red upon the Hoosier moon
For Belle was strong and full of doom;
And think of all them Norska men
Who'll never see St. Paul again.

One of the last direct links between Belle Gunness and the present day is an old, old woman confined in the Longcliff Hospital for the Insane at Logansport, Indiana. She has been a patient there for a good many years and is one of the characters of the institution. She worked at Belle's place for several months and is not adverse to talking about it. The favorite question asked this old woman is "What did Belle Gunness do with all those men?" And the invariable reply, accompanied by a truly horrible leer, is "She fed 'em to the hawgs."

On the subject of Belle being alive or dead the old crone is noncommittal. "Who knows?" she says.

If Belle still lives, as many believe, she is eighty-two years old in 1941. That's getting on, as they say; but should I happen on a farmhouse in some back-country place and the proprietor is a husky old woman who kills her own hogs, I'll be on my way—no matter the road or the weather.

Murder at Harvard



S T E W A R T H. H O L B R O O K

NOT ALL of the sons of Harvard, not even Harvard doctors of philosophy, appear to know that the university on the Charles was the scene of one of the most celebrated crimes in American annals. This is a melancholy state of affairs, for the setting of the murder was indubitably a college building and the criminal, who was John White Webster, A.B. 1811, and M.D. 1815, remains the only Harvard professor to perform lethally while a member of the faculty, and the sole college professor to gain entrance to the *Dictionary of American Biography* on the strength not of his scholarship but of his stout and murderous right arm.

The painful celebrity that came to Harvard has gradually been dissipated in the ninety-five years intervening, yet more than one member of the faculty long felt the blight cast by Professor Webster. Bliss Perry has related how his mother at Williamstown, Massachusetts, refused to entertain a Harvard professor who had come there, circa 1870, as a delegate to a convention of New England college officials. Mrs. Perry vowed most firmly on this occasion that she could not sleep "if one of those Harvard professors was in the house." Incidentally, the professor, who had to find quarters elsewhere than in the Perry home, was James Russell Lowell.

One reason the crime achieved such notoriety was pungently pointed out at the time by the eminent Jared Sparks. "Our professors," said the then president of Harvard College, "do not often commit murder." Another reason for notoriety

was the prominence of the victim, Dr. George Parkman. And witnesses at the trial read like the index to one of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks's charming studies of New England.

But let us move upon the *corpus delicti*.

II

At about half-past one on the gray twenty-third of November, in 1849, Dr. George Parkman, one of Boston's best-known citizens, was seen afoot near the corner of Blossom and North Grove streets, moving rapidly toward Harvard Medical College, on the Boston side of the Charles. He was always in a hurry, Dr. Parkman, and his tall, lean figure, together with a prognathous jaw and a set of false teeth so white they fairly glittered, made him a marked man. Yet somewhere near or at the entrance to the Medical College he walked straight into Valhalla. Nor has he been seen since.

A man of Dr. Parkman's standing could not disappear without being missed immediately. It was he, a Harvard man himself, who had given the very land on which the then new Medical College building stood. He had also endowed the Parkman Chair of Anatomy, currently occupied by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. His family was prominent, and his brother, the Rev. Francis Parkman, was a well-known clergyman whose son of the same name was about to achieve fame as a historian. The Parkmans were in-laws of many old Boston families, including that of Robert Gould Shaw.

When Dr. Parkman did not return to his home on Walnut Street that afternoon of the twenty-third, search was begun at once by Charles M. Kingsley, the agent who looked after Parkman's many properties in the city. And next day, Robert Gould Shaw himself, after conferring with the Parkmans, had 28,000 handbills distributed announcing a reward of \$3,000 for recovery of the doctor alive, or \$1,000 for his body. Mr. Gould told police that he suspected a man who several months previously had robbed Dr. Parkman.

While police were looking for this unnamed thug, an astonishing event occurred. On Sunday, two days after the doctor's disappearance, there appeared at the door of the Rev. Francis Parkman's home, Professor John White Webster, who acted in "an abrupt and peculiar manner." Webster said that he had had an interview (a tremendous understatement, that) with the missing man in the Medical College on Friday afternoon, at which time he had paid Dr. Parkman \$483 "and some cents." The latter had then, said Webster, rushed out of the college. All of which favored the popular theory that Parkman had been waylaid, robbed, and doubtless murdered.

John White Webster was fifty-six years of age. After graduation from Harvard Medical School he had served in Guy's Hospital, London, and married Harriet Hickling, a daughter of the American vice-consul at St. Michael. Since 1824 he had taught chemistry at Harvard, and from 1827 had held the Erving Chair of Chemistry and Mineralogy. The Websters, who had four lovely daughters, lived in Cambridge and were much given to hospitality.

Hospitality of the sort the generous Websters lavished on faculty members and wives, as well as local and visiting celebrities, cost a good deal, even in the Cambridge of a century ago. And Professor Webster's salary of \$1,200 a year was not equal to it. True, he had the income from his lectures; but he was far from brilliant on the platform, and the income from this source was meager. Yet, while it was known to Robert Gould Shaw that on November 23 his brother-in-law had gone to collect money owed him by Webster, he did not suspect that Webster was responsible for Parkman's disappearance. Who, indeed, *could* suspect any such indiscretion in a faculty member of the college on the Charles?

It was a fact, though, that the financial affairs of Professor Webster had reached something of a climax. They were so involved that many whole pages of finely printed testimony

were required, a bit later, to make them clear—if ever they did become clear—to the jury. Briefly, it would appear that as early as 1842 Webster had first borrowed money from Parkman, in the sum of \$400. For this he gave his note secured by personal property. Then, in 1847, at a time when the first loan had not been repaid, Parkman had been one of a group to lend Webster more than \$2,000, this time taking a mortgage on all of his personal property, which included a cabinet of minerals. A year later, unknown to Parkman, Webster went to Robert Gould Shaw and by pathetic tales of misfortune prevailed on that kindly man to buy the cabinet of minerals outright for \$1,200. He failed to mention that this collection was already in pawn to Parkman.

Well, it was bound to happen soon or late, and one day the matter of Professor Webster's cabinet of minerals—soon to be the most famous collection in history—occurred in a conversation between Gould and Parkman. Now, Doctor Parkman patently enjoyed a low boiling point, and he became furious. From that moment onward poor Professor Webster knew what it was like to have a Yankee bloodhound on his trail. His creditor was a punctilious man who paid his own obligations when due and he expected the same of everybody else, even a Harvard professor.

III

Nothing came of the search for Doctor Parkman. The Charles was dragged. The Medical College was visited by swarms of police who also entered all of the college buildings in Cambridge. Strangers in Boston were picked up by the score, to be questioned and released. The theory of robbery and murder still held the fancy of both police and public, and apparently nobody suspected Professor Webster until a morose and obscure man named Ephraim Littlefield began to translate his brooding into action. Littlefield was janitor at the Medical College. He must have been of a particularly suspicious nature, for his entrance into the case as

an amateur detective was brought about by a generous act of Professor Webster's. On the Tuesday following Parkman's disappearance, Webster had presented Littlefield with a thumping big turkey—an astounding event, since it was the first gift the janitor had received in seven years of work at the college. Littlefield brooded over the turkey, which one is happy to note came from Foster's store, next door to the Howard Atheneum, which a bit later became the place where generations of Harvard undergraduates were to study anatomy. Littlefield not only brooded over the gift of the turkey, but he was troubled because talk on the street had it that "they'll sure find Doctor Parkman's body somewhere in the Medical College." (In those days medical colleges, both abroad and at home, were held to be notorious receivers of the products of professional body-snatchers.)

"I got tired," said Littlefield in explaining his next move, "of hearing all that talk about the Medical College." Accordingly, he procured what appears to have been a sufficient number of demolition tools to have supplied wreckers for all of Harvard University. Into his dismal basement apartment at the Medical College he lugged drills, hammers, chisels, crowbars. He told his wife that he was going to do nothing less than to dig through the brick vault under Professor Webster's room in the College. Mrs. Littlefield was dreadfully frightened. She objected that her husband would be dismissed from his job, should knowledge of his suspicions reach officials of the college. But she apparently felt differently about the matter after her husband related a conversation he had overheard between Webster and Parkman.

A few days before Parkman's disappearance, according to Littlefield, the janitor was helping Webster putter around his laboratory. The two men were busy and didn't hear a footstep. But suddenly, as if from nowhere, Doctor Parkman appeared on cat's feet. Immediately, said Littlefield, Doctor Parkman spoke up quick and loud—and harsh: "Doctor Webster, are you ready for me tonight?" And Webster re-

plied: "No, Doctor, I am not ready tonight." Parkman moved back toward the door, raised one arm and shook one fist. "Doctor Webster," he said savagely, "something must be accomplished tomorrow." Then he went out.

For the next several days Littlefield brooded and wondered whether, on the next call Doctor Parkman made on Professor Webster, the latter *had* been ready for him. So, on what must have been a gloomy and foreboding Thanksgiving Day, and while Mrs. Littlefield stood watch for possible interruptions, the janitor hammered and drilled and crowbarred his way into the solid brick wall of the vault beneath Professor Webster's laboratory. Progress was slow. At noon Littlefield refreshed himself with the astounding turkey, then returned to his labors, which were great. They really laid brick walls to stay, in that era of solid craftsmanship, and night found the janitor only part way through the bricks. He was a determined man, however, and on the following day, after performing his regular duties, he resumed his attack on the vault. And that night he broke through. "I held my light forward," he related, "and the first thing I saw was the pelvis of a man and two parts of a leg. I knew," he added darkly, "this was no place for such things."

Nor was it. Littlefield notified the police of his find, and when they had taken one look at the ghastly contents of the vault, they drove madly to Cambridge in a hack and called on Professor Webster. Constable Derastus Clapp, a man of devious Yankee ways, told Webster they should like him to attend them at the Medical College while a new search was being made. Webster replied that although the building already had been searched a number of times, nevertheless he would be glad to accompany the officers. He got into the hack, which soon crossed the bridge into Boston—and continued on past North Grove Street and toward Leverett Street Jail.

"Stop," cried Webster. "We are going in the wrong direction."

But devious Constable Derastus Clapp answered: "Oh, that's all right, Professor. He is a new coachman and somewhat green, but he will doubtless discover and correct his mistake." Boston had constables in those days of Transcendentalism.

In a few moments, however, the professor realized that he was not a free aid in a search, but a prisoner in Boston jail. Reporters came, and next day the press and all the town went delirious. "Horrible Suspicions!!" screamed the usually seemly and genteel *Evening Transcript*, "Arrest of Professor J. W. Webster." And it continued:

Since last evening our whole population has been in a state of the greatest possible excitement in consequence of the astounding rumor that the body of Dr. Parkman has been discovered and that Dr. John W. Webster, professor of chemistry at the Medical School of Harvard College, and a gentleman connected by marriage with some of our most distinguished families, has been arrested and imprisoned, on suspicion of being the murderer. . . . Never in the annals of crime in Massachusetts has such a sensation been produced.

And then, because Epes Sargent was editor of the *Transcript*, and because he probably wrote the story himself, we get the full flavor of the *Evening Transcript's* idea of reporting the crime of the century. The item continues:

In the streets, in the market-place, at every turn, men greet each other with pale, eager looks, and the inquiry, "Can it be true?" And then the terrible reply, "The circumstances begin to gather weight against him," is wrung forth; the agitated listener can only vent his sickening sense of horror, in some such expression as that of Hamlet—

O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

Never again, so far as I am aware, did the *Transcript* feel that a murder called for Shakespeare. Not even the famous Richardson and Pretty Choir Singer affair of later years rated the Bard.

IV

The trial opened on the nineteenth of March, 1850, when Professor Webster, "his step light and elastic, crossed and took his seat in the dock, his countenance betraying a degree of calm and dignified composure." He was quite short in stature, and seemed of no great strength to the "expert stenographer," John A. French, who noted and took down everything for publication in a "splendidly illustrated" pamphlet put out by the Boston Herald Steam Press. I cherish a worn copy of this horribly printed pamphlet, and had a distant forebear of mine not been otherwise so tremendously occupied, family folklore might have added considerably to my knowledge of the trial. Peter B. Brigham was excused from jury duty at the Webster trial on the improbable plea that he belonged to the Boston militia, was "liable to call at any moment," and was "thus exempt by the statute from serving on a jury."

The State promptly put Janitor Littlefield on the stand, and his accumulated testimony was bad indeed for Professor Webster. Defense attempted to throw suspicion on Littlefield himself, and it also presented a long and highly distinguished array of character and other witnesses. The Hon. John Gorham Palfrey, historian, former editor of the *North American Review*, and member of Congress, declared sonorously that Professor Webster was a man of some temper but of extremely good heart. President Jared Sparks of Harvard thought Webster "kind and humane." Nathaniel Bowditch, probably a son of the great mathematician, said that Webster was "irritable though kind-hearted." Other witnesses included members of prominent families—Bigelow, Codman, Dana, Lovering, Sanger, Wyman. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who gave his occupation as physician, testified at some length, both for the State and the defense. For the former he said that whoever had cut up the body alleged to be that

of Doctor Parkman had certainly been handy with surgical knives.

The State, of course, was attempting to prove that the remnants of human mortality which had been discovered in the vault, in a tin box filled mostly with tanbark in Webster's laboratory, and in the laboratory stove, were those of Dr. Parkman; and the defense was doing its best to prove the fragments to be those of almost anybody except Doctor Parkman.

While Dr. Nathan C. Keep was on the stand identifying the mineral teeth found in the stove to be the very same teeth he had made for Doctor Parkman, suddenly "here the City bells were rung for fire, and it being announced that the Tremont House was on fire, the Court granted an intermission, to allow the Attorney General, who boarded at the Tremont, to save his papers."

Upon resumption of the trial the spectators were given a grisly enough treat when Dr. Woodbridge Strong took the stand to discuss the matter of burning bodies. "I have dissected a good many bodies in my day," said Doctor Strong with evident relish. "I recollect a pirate I had given me one time, and as I only wanted the bones, I dissected him rapidly, and . . ." so on and on, until some of the less avid spectators left the courtroom.

Little by little, over what must have been ten terrible days for Professor Webster, the coils of circumstantial evidence could be seen closing around him, and late on the eleventh day the jury was charged by Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, another Harvard man (1800), in an address which is still considered by lawyers to be one of the greatest expositions of the law of circumstantial evidence ever delivered, and is referred to, in the quaint way of lawyers, as *Cushing* 295. Three hours later the jury returned with a verdict of guilty. There was no demonstration, for "an awful and unbroken silence ensued, in which the Court, the jury, the clerk, and

spectators seemed to be absorbed in their own reflections."

Professor Webster wasn't quite ready to greet the hangman, but his writ of error was denied, and he then addressed the Governor and Council, protesting his innocence and piously calling on the Great Searcher of human hearts as his witness. To no avail. And long before Professor Webster's neck was broken, quickly and efficiently, on August 30, 1850, he made a long confession. Janitor Littlefield had been right. Professor Webster *was* ready for Doctor Parkman, when he called on that fatal Friday. What had happened, according to Webster's confession, was this:

Doctor Parkman had come that day with the idea of getting some money. When denied it, he had called Webster both liar and scoundrel, and had shaken his fist in the professor's face. Then, said Webster, "I felt nothing but the sting of his words . . . and in my fury I seized whatever thing was handiest—it was a stick of wood—and dealt him an instantaneous blow with all the force that passion could give it." The one blow was enough. Parkman fell, bleeding at the mouth. Webster hurriedly bolted all the doors, stripped the dead man, hoisted him into the sink, and there dismembered him with the deft professional strokes that had been apparent to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes.

V

The Webster-Parkman affair unquestionably has had mention in more autobiographies and memoirs than any other murder case in America. The case probably comes nearer to filling the definition "classic" than any other crime in the nineteenth-century United States. Boston never quite forgave Charles Dickens for his interest in it. For, on his visit in 1869, when asked what he should most like to see of the city's great landmarks, he promptly replied, "the room where Doctor Parkman was murdered." He was taken to see it, too, by nobody but Doctor Holmes. And that evening, at a

dinner tendered the distinguished Briton, Henry W. Longfellow related a singular incident regarding Professor Webster.

Longfellow had often been a guest in the Webster home in Cambridge, and on one such occasion, a year or so before the crime, Webster had the lights of the dining room lowered and a servant brought a bowl of burning chemicals which shed a ghastly luminescence on the faces of those at the table. Webster then stood up, said Longfellow, took a rope from beneath the table, and cast it around his own short thick neck, like a noose. He then leaned over the glowing bowl, rolled his eyes, lolled his head to one side, and stuck out his tongue, like one hanged. Some of the guests thought it an odd idea of entertainment.

Perhaps the best bit of folklore, though, concerns sardonic Ben Butler, to whom Harvard had failed to grant an LL.D. While cross-examining a witness in court, and treating him rather roughly, a judge reminded Butler that the witness was no less than a Harvard professor. "Yes, I know, your honor," said Ben. "We hanged one the other day."

For the next half century or more Harvard faculty members were constantly undergoing similar pleasantries, according to the late Albert Bushnell Hart, who told me that the ribbing was still prevalent in his early days at Harvard, in the 1880's. And in recent years, so Harlow Shapley reports, the chief comment on the case concerns wonder that only *one* Harvard professor has murdered another. This fact leaves the incidence of murder among Harvard faculty members very low—one in approximately every three centuries.

Actuarially speaking, the job of teaching there remains a fairly good risk.

The Tale of the Murderous Philologist with But One Big Toe

C A R L C A R M E R

THE Schutts were driving along the towpath one day and there walking beside the canal they saw a bright-faced young man who looked tired and hungry. They stopped and asked him about himself and he said his name was Edward H. Ruloffson, his home was Hammond River near St. John in New Brunswick, Canada, and he had come to the States to start his career. The Schutts were good people, so they took him into the wagon and they drove him home to Dryden. He turned out to be such a smart young fellow and so handy around the place they just kept him and sent him to school. It was only a short time before he had learned as much as the teacher knew, changed his name for some reason or other to Ruloff, and had a good job working in the drugstore. The Schutts got to be quite fond of him. So did their daughter Harriet, and the first thing the old folks knew he'd up and married the girl. Then the happy couple moved over near Ithaca to a farm not far from Rogue's Harbor.

At first they seemed to be getting along all right. They had a baby, a little girl, and Ruloff was working steadily. Then one night folks nearby heard them quarreling. Some people say it was because he wouldn't let her go back to Dryden to visit her folks.

The next morning about ten o'clock Ruloff was over at the Robertson place, across the road from his own, asking for the loan of a horse and a democrat wagon because he wanted to take a box of books in to Mottville. Tom Robertson said it was all right and when he saw Ruloff trying to lift a big wooden box onto the democrat he walked out and gave him a hand. It was mighty heavy, Tom said afterwards, but he knew books were heavy so he didn't suspect anything.

Just as Ruloff took up the reins from the whip socket some school children who were out for noon recess asked for a ride and he let them climb up the back wheel and ride on top of the wooden box. Tom saw them pass over the top of the hill, the children playing on top of that box, and he said later he wouldn't forget it to his dying day, especially after he'd found out that almost certainly the corpses of Ruloff's wife and little girl were under the wooden cover they played on.

No one ever saw the box again. When people missed Mrs. Ruloff, her husband said she'd gone away to visit relatives in Ohio. Somebody told the Schutts about it over in Dryden but before any of them could get to Ruloff's place he had gone away and left no address. One of the Schutt boys started out on the trail and he caught up with his brother-in-law at Buffalo. Ruloff convinced young Schutt that he was on his way to join Harriet in Madison, Ohio, and persuaded him to go along as far as Cleveland by way of Lake Erie. Just before the boat left the dock, Ruloff gave young Schutt the slip and got off, leaving the boy to make the trip alone.

Strangely enough, Ruloff was on the boat dock at Cleveland when Harriet's brother returned from Madison where he found no trace of his sister. This time Ruloff said his wife had disappeared and he didn't know where she was. With apparent willingness he returned to Ithaca where an aroused countryside saw to it that he was arrested and tried. Since

the death of his wife could not be proved, the most serious crime for which he could be indicted was abduction. That was sufficient, however, to bring him a sentence of ten years in Auburn prison.

Ruloff enjoyed those ten years. The prison library was well supplied with Greek and Latin classics and finally people who had discovered his interest in languages brought him other volumes. His mind was sharp and retentive and he knew more about languages than most scholars in America when he was released.

Unfortunately for him his old neighbors' minds were also retentive and as the time for his liberation drew near their wrath surged up again.

No sooner had the prisoner been set free than he was rearrested for the murder of his child. The trial of this case occasioned a Court of Appeals judgment famous in American jurisprudence: "Absence in and of itself is not sufficient in a criminal case to establish death." Even while the court was debating this "corpus delicti" decision, however, Ruloff was escaping. He had won the affection and loyalty of the jailer's son, Albert Jarvis, and the two of them were bouncing along snowy roads behind a team of galloping black horses.

No one knows why Ruloff gave himself up a few months later. Perhaps he had advance knowledge of the Court of Appeals decision. At any rate, he surrendered himself while the judges were still debating and was immediately lodged in the Ithaca jail. But the escape cost him more dearly than he was for a long time to realize. The extreme cold of that winter night froze off the big toe of his left foot, a fact that was to have its sinister influence after many years had passed.

But Ruloff had overlooked an immediate danger. One day many citizens of Ithaca and Dryden received a printed poster which read as follows:

Shall the Murderer Go Unpunished?

Edward Ruloff will soon gain his freedom unless prompt and effective measures are taken by the people to prevent it. . . .

Shall these things be? Shall this monster be turned loose to glut his tiger appetite for revenge and blood? . . . In the name of humanity, in the name of the relatives of the murdered wife whose heartstrings have been lacerated by the fiend in human shape, in the name of the murdered wife and child, whose pale ghost calls to you from the silent tomb to do your duty, we ask you, shall the murderer go unpunished? . . . Will you allow this man who bears the mark of Cain upon his brow go forth in this community and add fresh victims to the grave? No, you will not! You cannot!

We call on those who wish justice done to the murderer to meet at the Clinton House in Ithaca on Saturday, March 12, 1859, at 12 o'clock noon. It will depend on the action you take that day whether Edward H. Ruloff walks forth a free man or whether he dies the death he so richly deserves.

At the meeting scheduled on the poster plans were made for constructing a battering ram and raiding the prisoner's cell. The ram was completed on the very day that Sheriff Robertson got wind of the conspiracy and spirited Ruloff away to Auburn prison for safe-keeping. So great was the mob's disappointment that Sheriff Robertson lost his job at the next election.

Little is known of the twenty years of Ruloff's life between his escape and the sequence of strange events which led to his death. Young Albert Jarvis, the jailer's boy, stayed with him, believing in him implicitly, and a man named Dexter joined them. It is said that the three committed various crimes, mostly burglaries, in New England and that Ruloff served short sentences in various prisons for his part in them. When, however, he posed in a New Hampshire town as an

Episcopal minister, graduate of Oxford, while he planned the robbing of the town bank, an irate judge sent him to prison for ten years. He escaped after three months.

Ruloff had not forgotten his scholarly gifts when he left Auburn. On the contrary, he had developed them until he could speak fluently in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French and German. Gradually his interest in philology supplanted his taste for crime and for several years he lived in New York City, first in Delancey Street and later on Third Avenue, as a studious, industrious, well-behaved citizen. During his first prison term he had begun work on a volume showing the common origin of all languages. This he entitled *Method in Formation of Language* and pushed to its conclusion as rapidly as his painstaking scholarship would allow. He convinced his two associates-in-crime that the publication of the work would be an event of such importance in the book world that it would not be necessary for any of them either to work or to steal again, and both of them were overjoyed when Ruloff told them he expected to get financial backing for his project at a convention of the American Philological Association at Poughkeepsie in 1867.

The distinguished faculty of the new college founded at Poughkeepsie by Matthew Vassar and the visiting philologists from other American seats of learning were greatly impressed at their meeting by one Professor Edouard Leurio who presented his erudite theories in a manuscript—*Method in Formation of Language*. Not one of them suspected as he listened to the suave flow of the professor's sentences that the speaker was a convicted felon, the probable murderer of his own wife and child, a masquerader under an alias, a scholar whose learning had been acquired in an institution of reform rather than of education. But when the professor asked for money to enable him to publish his contribution they politely informed him that there were neither precedents nor funds for such an enterprise.

Ruloff left Poughkeepsie in a towering rage. Jarvis and

Dexter were taken aback. They had supposed the publication of the work a certainty. Now they began to doubt its worth, and their leader decided on a last desperate venture to obtain for his researches their rightful recognition before the world.

One dark midnight soon thereafter three burglars entered the Halbert Shoe Store in the city of Binghamton, New York. Two clerks, Burrows and Merrick, who were sleeping on the premises, gave battle and one of them, Merrick, was mercilessly shot to death by the leader of the bandits. All through the early morning hours Burrows and a posse of townspeople sought the criminals. When sunlight came two of the latter were plainly visible floating lifeless on the clear waters of the Susquehanna. Their bodies were so bruised that many thought they had been beaten unconscious by the man whose murderous crime they had witnessed before they were thrown into the deeps of the river to drown.

About midnight of that day an officer accosted a courteous elderly gentleman who was carrying a brief case and whose only irregularity of conduct seemed to be that he was crouching in an uncomfortable position in an outhouse near the city limits of Binghamton. The gentleman willingly accompanied the constable to the sheriff's office where he explained that he was a traveling scholar somewhat embarrassed by a lack of funds. The sheriff at once apologized for delaying him and the benignly smiling gray-haired student had turned to go when a man whose memory had been groping back through twenty years noticed a depression in the left shoe of the sheriff's guest, just over the big toe.

"Aren't you Ruloff?" said the man.

"Yes," said the scholar promptly and he went on to talk of the injustices that had been done in the past to a man whose only interest was in the classics and philology. He spoke so charmingly and convincingly that he was soon shaking hands with the sheriff and the other men in the office and they were all bidding him Godspeed.

He had been on his way again an hour or so before investigators at the scene of the murder reported that one of the burglars had left behind a pair of shoes, the left of which showed a distinct indentation over the big toe. Frantic pursuers soon caught the fugitive who was walking briskly along the railroad tracks in a direction away from Binghamton.

Soon, though Ruloff defended himself at his trial with all his famous cunning, he was reposing behind prison walls again, reading and rereading his favorite poem, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, sending out appeal after appeal that his life might be spared in the interests of classical learning. A popular movement to gain him a reprieve gained such momentum among the sentimental and the pious scholarly that it would have succeeded had it not been for the insistence of New York's Governor Hoffman that the law take its course.

But Ruloff was executed, hanged on a sunny, mid-May morning at the last public hanging in Binghamton. I talked with a farmer who saw it and he told me that when they asked Ruloff if he wanted a minister to pray for him on the scaffold he said no, but if they wanted one up there to pray for the crowd it would be all right with him. And when the hanging was delayed a little past eleven o'clock in the morning, which was the time set, he complained, saying, "Hurry it up. I want to be in hell in time for dinner." The hanging was unusually gruesome, the farmer said, because, with characteristic bravado, Ruloff had put his right hand in his pocket before the trap was sprung. The fall jerked the hand free, he said, but Ruloff, still apparently conscious, put it back in his pocket.

After he was dead his body was displayed in its coffin outside the prison for a while. Then authorities from Cornell took it to extract the brain which they preserved in alcohol and displayed at the university. Scholars later stated that it weighed almost seven ounces more than the average, a half

ounce more than that of the great Thackeray, five ounces more than that contained in the massive head of Daniel Webster.

No sooner had the body been buried than with the speed of modern tabloids sensational books began to appear purporting to reveal the truth about Ruloff and his crimes. *The Veil of Secrecy Removed* (published in Binghamton) stated that it was "The Only True and Authentic History of Edward H. Ruloff," but *The Man of Two Lives*, published by the American News Company in New York in 1871, also claimed itself reliable. As a matter of fact, no one has ever known definitely what happened to Ruloff's wife and child, though for a long time there was a rumor that the child was alive and dwelling in Pennsylvania. And no one has ever known what went on inside the massive convoluted brain at which curious visitors now stare without remembering.

The Restless Bones of Lizzie Lowell

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**R I C H A R D   D E M P E W O L F F**

[ 1 ]

**W**INTER comes early to Maine's picturesque Androscoggin River valley, and in the uplands just northwest of Lewiston, farmers set about preparing for it in September and early October. That is exactly what John Small was doing, on the morning of October 15, 1873, as his cart jounced over a rough wagon trail leading through a deep pine forest three miles back in the hills above the mill town.\* For two years Farmer Small had been clearing timber from a tract of land beyond Barker's Mills near Switzerland Road, and selling it in Lewiston.

On this particular day, he was bent on collecting what was left of the cutting from the previous winter, and as his cart bumped along he kept a sharp eye peeled for likely looking fallen timber. At last he spotted a sturdy log, but it was back off the trail, in among the dense undergrowth. Mr. Small was required to climb from the cart and "tote it along a piece from where it lay." The log was a long one, and to maneuver it toward the road, the old man had to heave it end over end. As he was thus occupied he caught a glimpse of something under the boughs of a scrubby pine thicket.

"They were little spots in two straight lines," he later explained. "Looked like little buttons. I thought I would go

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\* Today this whole area is submerged beneath the waters of a lake formed by the building of Gulf Island Dam.

and see what they were. I then discovered cloth between these two lines. It was nearly covered with pine leaves. I looked a little sharper, and in that cloth I saw button holes between the two rows of spots. I then looked down, and, under the pine leaves, saw the remains of an entire human being, with the exception of the head!"

The farmer was excited, and who can blame him? He dug around in the needle-matted forest floor long enough to make sure that what he had discovered was truly a corpse. It was worse. What he had come upon was a headless skeleton. The gruesome thing was draped in the weathered remains of a fancy silk dress with a hoop skirt, and the feet were encased in high button serge boots with kid tops. Mr. Small had seen enough. He hurried out to the river road and hailed the first buggy that came along.

"There is a skeleton hid in the woods," said he, "and do you go down and tell the City Marshal while I wait here."

The passerby jumped from his rig to verify this startling information, and then high-tailed it for town to break the news.

Lewiston was barely a city in 1873, having just received its charter a scant decade before. The old stagecoach, loaded with passengers and mail from Boston and New York, swerved with reluctance from the Portland-Augusta Post Road, to make stops at the growing hamlet. But as more and more mill races jutted into the Androscoggin below the rugged grandeur of Lewiston Falls, stopovers became imperative. For greater numbers of travellers debarked here than did at any of the other old established landings on the Post.

A town growing as fast as Lewiston was in those days has a tendency to hang on with grim tenacity to its old village customs. Hence it is not surprising to find that when Farmer Small's messenger rode into town in his swaying rig, he did not consider his duty complete upon informing the City Marshal. His stop on Pine Street at the magnificent new

City Building, with its 32 foot mansard roof \* was only the first of many. Subsequently he became a town crier and drove wildly through the streets shouting to all who would hear him that a "heap of human bones" had been found out on Switzerland Road.

City Marshal H. H. Richardson had barely reached the scene when the hordes began to arrive, some on foot and others in whatever conveyance they happened to be employing when the gallant Paul Revere interrupted them with his scandalous news. By the time Coroner Ham Brooks and his death wagon thundered down the river road and off into the wood lot trail, the pine forest was swarming with curious onlookers. Ham Brooks' first worry was that the remains would be disturbed. He shouldered his way through the crowd and came upon the City Marshal standing guard over the skeleton. Mr. Brooks was quite abrupt. He waved a sack that he had brought with him and said: "We will proceed to take the remains up."

This was done with great ceremony, and close scrutiny of every bone. Mr. Richardson "commenced where the head would have been, and Mr. Brooks commenced at the feet, taking it up." Thus, they worked toward the middle of the mouldering skeleton, commenting over everything they found. Suddenly the City Marshal discovered a pearl button with a little brass ornament, "on the stomach bone" † un-

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\* This structure was the pride and joy of Lewiston. Dedicated "with imposing ceremonies" in December, 1872, it occupied the whole block between Park and Lisbon Streets, fronting on Pine. It was built of brick, with granite trim, and was "generally Gothic." The walls rose 106 feet from the street to the cornice, and the 32 foot mansard roof capped it all. This feature was "broken into almost every variety of shape by gables and Gothic devices," and to further enhance its grandeur, was surmounted by a tower that rose 206 feet from the Pine Street side. The interior of the colossus "in point of design and beauty, was on a scale commensurate with the exterior." When fire destroyed the building on January 7, 1890, every heart in Lewiston was fairly broken.

† Mr. Richardson was corrected on this little misconception a number of times, but remained steadfast. Others could call it a chest bone, or sternum, or what they pleased. It was situated over the stomach; and to him it was a stomach bone—that was that.

der the dress. This was carefully set aside, as were several other cloth covered buttons, a quantity of lace fringe from the dress, an ear ornament, and "about a dessert spoonful of bead bugles."

When the last speck had been gathered a brief inquest was held, the members of the jury being picked from the crowd. Then the officers drove back to Lewiston and set to work. Great excitement swept the city, and the case was promptly dubbed "The Mystery of the Headless Skeleton." Both the *Lewiston Journal* and the *Lewiston Herald* carried day by day narratives of progress in the affair.

Although Coroner Ham Brooks' inquest at the scene produced a verdict that the skeleton constituted the remains of a female person unknown, there was no such formal doubt in the mind of one George C. Wing, the County Attorney. He harked back to a Red Letter Sunday three and a half years before, and recalled that one Lizzie Lowell had disappeared in a mysterious fashion. It didn't require much rationalizing to arrive at the conclusion that this was the key to the riddle.

[ 2 ]

Lizzie Lowell was about 28 years old, and quite a belle, as belles went in Maine in 1870. Unfortunately, there is no description to do her justice, but judging from the jealousy of her husband she must have been reasonably fair to gaze upon. We know that she was extraordinarily fond of pretty clothes, and that on more than one occasion she used her feminine wiles to attract the attention of various young blades about town. It was this little trick that infuriated Jim Lowell more than anything else, and Lizzie knew it. If she was as typically feminine as she appears to be, she probably indulged in mild flirtations for the simple purpose of infuriating her spouse. It wasn't hard. She had no more than to look at another man and Mr. Lowell would go into fits of ungovernable fury. When he was seized by these jealous



rages, Lizzie usually lost out, and why she persisted in provoking them is one of those unanswerable questions.

On one occasion, when Lizzie was visiting her sister, Charlissa Willett and her husband, in Bradley, Jim followed her there "just to make sure she wasn't going no place else." The two women were sitting on the piazza when he came up on the steps and plunked himself down on a trunk. Lizzie was just putting on a "shaker" and Jim did not like it. "Take that damn thing off," he said. "You wear it just to please the men."

Lizzie immediately denied that this was so, and "Jim took it off for her." The young wife then threw herself onto the lounge and burst into tears.

This show of emotion didn't please Jim Lowell. "Get me a bowl of water," he ordered Charlissa. "We got to use her rough." When the water arrived, he threw it in her face, and repeated the process until she "came out of it."

Jim Lowell stayed at Willett's that night, to keep an eye on Lizzie. The two couples slept in adjoining rooms and toward midnight Charlissa was awakened by cries from Lizzie.

"What's the matter with you, you are kind of out, ain't you?" said Charlissa, with some annoyance.

"Jim was pricking me with a knife," the woman answered.

Mr. Willett thereupon commanded Jim to quit, and a moment later the knife dropped to the floor. The hosts examined it and found it to be a fairly grim instrument, with a blade about six inches long.\* Sure enough, Jim Lowell had been sticking it in Lizzie's arm "to get back at her for wearing the shaker."

On the following day, the four were sitting on the piazza when Lizzie's cousin, Charlie Parody strolled by. "Oh," said Lizzie, "there is Charlie Parody. I have not seen him for a long time. I must go and speak to him."

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\* Jim later told his brother-in-law that it was a "real Indian knife" that a friend had procured from the chief of an inland tribe.

Jim was after her in an instant. He grabbed her by the arm and dragged her back. "Get into the house and mind your own business, Goddam you," he snapped. Lizzie went.

In the winter of 1870, shortly after this episode, Lizzie's mother, Mrs. Sarah Burton, came down from her home in East Holden with another daughter, Georgia, to spend a few days at the Lowell rooms on College Street. Georgia fell ill with a fever while they were there and Mrs. Burton was afraid the sickness was serious. Jim was not home, but Lizzie offered to go down to the Lewiston House for Dr. Edgecomb. She returned an hour later, and soon was followed by Jim.

"I just saw you going into that Lewiston House with three men, you old bitch," he said. Without further ado, he threw her to the floor and pulled her hair, yelling, "By God, I will kill you."

If Mrs. Burton hadn't entered at that moment and threatened to take Lizzie home with her, the story might well have ended here, because Jim Lowell virtually was trying to choke his wife to death, and no amount of explaining could convince him that she had not been up to some sinful business that afternoon.

The five years of the Lowell's married life were peppered with such exhibitions of jealous cruelty on the part of Jim, and it is small wonder that in May of 1870 Lizzie became fed up with it, and left her husband's bed and board. She took a position with Mrs. Sophronia Blood at No. 10 Hill Corporation, and moved her belongings little by little from the College Street rooms when she knew Jim would be out.

Then, late in May, Sophronia's daughter, Abby Gerry, who lived on Turner Street, came down with a baby and Lizzie went over for several days to help out. While she was there, Jim Lowell came around in his battered old carriage to pay her a visit.

At first he pretended to be very sorry for everything he had done, and coaxed Lizzie out to the buggy, promising

her "a nice drive to the Falls." Foolishly she condescended, and when the pair were out of the house, Mr. and Mrs. Gerry suddenly were startled by ear-splitting shrieks. Abby was still in bed but Mr. Gerry hurried to the window and saw an amazing sight. Jim Lowell was "poking a pistol in his wife's stomach and shouting obscene things at her." Then he was seen to pocket the weapon, seize his horse whip from the whipsocket in the carriage, and snap it at Lizzie. She received several vicious lashes across the face before she could turn and dash back into the house.

Lowell followed her, cursing roundly, and was stopped at the door by Mr. Gerry. "What's the matter with you, Jim Lowell?"

"Nothing," was the man's reply.

"Then git," said Gerry, "for I can not have such work as this going on here."

Jim Lowell did not git. Instead he went into the house and demanded to talk with Abby Gerry. The woman consented to see him and he pleaded with her to make Lizzie go home with him. Abby refused to have anything to do with it. "If you want your wife to live with you," she said, "you should not ought to poke pistols at her and attempt to take her life."

Jim thought this a great joke. "I did it for the fun in it," he explained. "The pistol was not loaded. I did it to scare her."

In spite of the man's persuasions, Lizzie did not go home with him. She returned to Sophronia's after a few days and for the next week Jim haunted the Blood household, begging her to go riding, threatening her if she did not, and bewailing his fate between times. He received nothing but blunt refusals and Liz lived in comparative peace until Saturday, June 11th.

On that day, the gaily painted wagons of a circus rumbled into Lewiston, and riggers soon were busy setting up the tents in an open field out near Gardiner. Along about noon,

who should appear at Sophronia Blood's but Jim Lowell, with his lame "one-horse team" and buggy.

After considerable pleading and promises to behave himself, he prevailed upon his wife to go with him to the circus. Lizzie decked herself out in her finest array, and the pair drove off to have a night of fun. Evidently things went fairly well—with one exception; Lizzie made eyes at a circus man. Her jealous husband called her down in front of everyone. They left the circus right after this and went for a ride, quarreling most of the way. But they must have enjoyed it, because Lizzie didn't get home until late that night and "seemed quite happy."

The next day was Sunday, June 12, 1870, and Lewiston had good cause to remember it. For at high noon the Central Hall caught fire, and within half an hour the flames had reached three times the height of the building. Everyone was there to see it. When word of the catastrophe reached Sophronia's establishment, Lizzie promptly "asked off" until tea time, donned a new dress that had just been made for her, and went down to the fire to show it off. She had plenty of opportunity, because all the important ladies of the town were there, and she stationed herself across from the flaming ruins above a passageway leading into a blacksmith's shop. Practically everyone going to and coming from the fire had to notice her. Jim Lowell was at the fire, too, and stood across the road watching Lizzie like a hawk. The woman undoubtedly was aware of this. She took great pains to draw the attention of the ladies to her new frock. In some respects this was good, because the voluminous dress was brought under the critical observation of a number of women \* who were able to recall it later in every detail.

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\* A certain Miss Lydia Blethon was one of the first to see the dress, but refused to be swept off her feet by it. She remarked later: "My attention was called to the dress by herself. It was silk, with an entirely plain skirt; waist and sleeves trimmed with black lace. She had a pink bow on her bosom. I thought the lace rather ordinary . . . it looked some rusty, like a lace that had been worn. I thought it was not rich at all. It looked rather ordinary for so nice a silk."

Just how long Lizzie strutted among the envious and scornful females before she caught sight of her circus man is a point of doubt. At any rate, the gentleman at whom she had made eyes the night before happened by, and far be it from Lizzie to miss a golden opportunity when she was all dressed up, and knew that her eagle-eyed husband was watching for just an occurrence. She not only hailed the circus man, but she cornered him and engaged him in conversation.

Jim Lowell reacted in typical fashion. He ran across the street and "sent the circus man running, with threats and bad language." Then he turned to his wife and said: "Git home and mind your damned business."

Lizzie was an independent woman, now, and probably felt that she no longer need take orders from her husband. "I will not go home until I get ready," she said saucily, and started off down the street after the circus man while Jim Lowell yelled curses at her.

That night, Jim made up his mind. He cleaned his buggy, groomed his lame mare, and went calling at Blood's. Lizzie, strangely enough, accepted his invitation to go driving, and after finishing her chores, put on her new dress again, and went out to the carriage. Several people saw them as they drove out toward the river road about 6 P.M. Amaziah Stewart saw them near the Bates Street crossing, and bowed. Mrs. Dorcas Pray and her daughter said "good evening" to them up on Main Street near the town pump. Twenty minutes later, just as it was growing "duskish" Mr. Henry Tripp and his wife, Flavilla, passed them in their buggy out beyond Barker's Mills on Switzerland Road. Both couples bowed and exchanged suitable greetings.

That was the last anyone saw of Lizzie Lowell. Jim was seen later that same evening by Willie Tuttle, the hostler, when he brought his carriage into Clark's livery stable at nine o'clock. But he was alone.

Naturally there would be questions asked, and Mr. Lowell didn't do any too well answering them. In fact, he acted very

strangely. The very next morning he drove around by Mrs. Blood's, but with no intention of stopping there. He would have gone right by if Sophronia hadn't been out sweeping the piazza and seen him. "Where is Lizzie this morning?" the woman shouted. Jim pulled in his team and answered, "I left her at your door at ten o'clock last night."

"You did not do any such thing," the woman insisted, "for I waited up until ten o'clock, and she had not come."

"Yes, I did," said Jim. "When I turned to go on, the corporation clock was striking ten. I suppose she went off with that damned circus fellow."

Mrs. Blood said that she wished Lizzie would come back because she needed her for the housework, and Jim assured her that he would go to Portland after the circus and bring her back "one of these days."

On thinking over this alibi, he must have felt he had something. Later in the week he met Mrs. Jepson on Main Street and she asked him if he had heard from Lizzie, for it was natural that the whole town should know of her disappearance by this time. "I went to Portland after the circus and had a policeman with me," Jim said. "But the circus has gone farther, and I did not see nor hear about Lizzie."

To Sumner Wright, a farmer living out near the Stetson schoolhouse, he presented a slightly different picture that same day. Jim was driving down the road at a good clip when Mr. Wright waved him to stop, for the sole purpose of asking the question that was on everyone's tongue. "Whar's yer woman?"

"The damned critter has gone off with the circus, and I have at last got rid of her," Jim told him. "I am not worried of her ever troubling me again. I mean to get me one I can have connection with without her quarreling with me every time." He gave his mare a good lick and was off.

If Jim Lowell had kept his mouth shut he might have been better off. But he was a talkative fellow at best and a few days later when he ran across his old friend Aretus

Harris, in Greene, he was disposed to bring up the subject of his missing wife himself, although Aretus hadn't yet heard about it.

"I have broke up housekeeping," said Lowell, "and my wife has gone to New York, from which place I had a letter from her last week."

By the end of June there was a great deal of speculation as to what had happened to the "wayward" Lizzie. Mrs. Burton wrote several letters to Jim, but could get no answer from him. Then, one Sunday night Sarah Burton had a dream, and wrote of it to a friend in Lewiston:

*. . . It seemed as if I was in Lewiston. I did not see any mills, but something seemed to say: "there are mills here." As I was on this road, all at once, I saw a wagon ahead and I said to myself: That is Jim and Lizzie. I wondered they were out there riding together. I seemed to keep along behind them up the road, with the river on one side, and all woods, when Jim turned off the river road into a by-road—into a pasture as it seemed to me—sort of a pasture road. Then I lost sight of them when they disappeared in a thicket of pines. Then I saw her on the ground, and Jim standing over her. She was pleading for her life. I heard her say, "O, don't murder me!" She was holding up her arms. Then her arm dropped down by her side. She sank down. He had his hand raised up as if to strike her. I tried to get to them, but a thick fog seemed between us. I could see the pines waving over. They were not large pines, but thick, and she seemed to be lying upon sidling ground.*

*I was greatly frightened by my dream—and it did not seem like a dream. I had been to bed but a little while, and the moon was bright in the room. I did not tell my dream the next morning. I said I had a bad dream and I would not tell it to them, for the saying was: "Dream Sunday nights and tell it Monday morning it will surely come to pass." I told it after a little while and I could not keep it out of my mind. Nights when the wind blows, it wakes me up, and I think it is the sound of the pines over Lizzie.*

Jim had no way of knowing about the dream, and he reacted to local curiosity with supreme indifference. On July 6th, he went to Mrs. Blood's and asked her for his wife's

clothes "to take up to father's to put with the rest of her things." Sophronia refused to give them to him, however, in the event that Lizzie should return. "Have you heard from her?" she asked. Jim replied vaguely that he had word she was "somewhere in Lawrence."

That afternoon, he returned to the residence on College Street where he and Lizzie had kept house, and gathered up what clothes the missing woman had left there. He piled them in his buggy and drove out to the home of his cousin, Cyrus Lowell, in Greene, who evidently was a sucker for "swapping." Cyrus later recalled the episode vividly: "I received a pair of pants from him. There were spots on the front of the right knee. I swapped boots with him, and got the pants to boot; let him have a pair of calf boots, and got a pair of calf boots in return. I can not tell the difference in value between boots. I also received from him five dresses, one underwaist, a chemise, a pair of drawers, a hood, a cloud and a muff. I traded for them a silver, open faced cylinder watch. I had painted a wagon for that watch." \*

When the bartering was finished, Jim went out into the barnyard back of his cousin's house and found Mary and Francissa Smith, two sisters of Cyrus' wife. He joshed with them awhile, and then got Francissa, a fifteen-year-old girl, to one side in the woodshed and asked her if she would marry him—this a scant three weeks after Lizzie had disappeared.

"I would not," said the girl. "Where is your wife?"

"She has gone off with the circus," said Jim with conviction, "and if you will have me she will never come back to trouble us."

Francissa was not to be misled. "I will not have a married man," she said. "If I cannot have a single one I will not have any at all."

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\* There was good cause for Cyrus to recall the transaction. The boots he got from Jim in trade for his own wore out in no time. The stained trousers were bloodstained and used for an exhibit in the case, and all of Lizzie's dresses also were attached. Cyrus had nothing to show for his silver watch when it was all over.



If Francissa wouldn't yield to his devastating charms, there was still Mary Smith. Jim got her into the woodshed no more than fifteen minutes later and said he had "something pretty for her." This proved to be a gold chain, which he had found among Lizzie's belongings.

"I will give you this chain if you will let me kiss you," he said.

"I want neither," Mary said bluntly. She permitted him to put the chain around her neck, though, and went through a repeat performance with a ring that Lowell had in his pocket. This bauble he offered on the condition that she would marry him. Mr. Lowell was doomed to defeat that day. Mary would have none of him, either. He went back to College Street and stayed close to his rooms for several days.

Along toward the first of August, as though in answer to everyone's rising doubts, several notes turned up from Lizzie herself—penned in a strange scrawl for a woman of Lizzie's delicacy.

The first one was written to Mrs. Blood, from whom Jim Lowell was still trying to get Lizzie's clothes. It read as follows:

*Dear friend*

*Tell my Dear beloved husbun that he will never see me again i hav don wrong i hav Lied a bout him he never used me bad but once i want you to see him and tell him i want you to give him all of my clothes tell that girl that goes with Savage that i want her to cort Jimy and have him She never can get a beter one (Tell Jennie\* to kiss Jimmy three times for me—Lizzie)*

At the same time, Georgia got an equally interesting message from her missing sister:

*Aug the 1 1870*

*Dear Sister*

*I take the pen in hand to Let you no i am not ded i am in the place named ded-hum. Addie is very Cick i think Yu better Go home now if You dont Come home now You never Will See her*

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\* Jennie Lowell, another relative with whom Jim was trying to make time.

*be case the doctor Ses She never Will Get Well a Gain Whare  
is gim and What is he duing Georgie Will you please Go Over  
to miss blood and Get What thinges that i have Got Over there  
bee Cause i have nuthing but my Cilk dress down here and  
Muther Gave me a Calico dress to were duing hose Work in  
and that is all i have Gut down here You git those thinges and  
box them up and Cend them to me and and dont fall George  
Yu Can tell Miss blood war i am but tell her not to tell gim  
Show this letter to Miss blood i Cant Write no more now a  
Sunday i See martha last Sunday She Want yu to Come home  
Get those things be Chure and if you Cum home you may pack  
my things in your trunk and bring them things Write home  
With Your things and if you dont Come home you may put  
them in a box and Cend them home by express be Chure and  
not tell gim donit let aney wone no that yu have heard from me*

*Good by  
from your Sister  
Lizzie M Lowell*

*Get the things As Soon As yu Can*

Then, about the fourth of August, Mrs. Burton, who was herself residing in East Holden (nearby to Dedham), received a letter from Jim Lowell in answer to at least half a dozen she had written him. It was quite short and uninformative:

*Dear Mother i tak this optunity to answer you kind Leter witch  
i got a few days ago and was glad to hear from you i hav not  
heard from lizza sense She went away only whot a girl told me  
She told me that She saw her after the forth She told her that  
she was going to leave the place for good and never would  
never see her a gain for she should never rite to me georga was  
out here last weeke and i have not scene since give my love to  
all and a Large shere to your self So good By and good Luck  
from James M Lowell\**

*i am coming down in a few weeks  
rite and tell me All the news*

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\* Jim Lowell's handwriting was as unique as his spelling and grammar, but he was exceedingly proud of it. Georgia watched him write a note in Greene one day and was impressed. "You are a pretty splendid writer, ain't you, Jim?" she said. "O Lord, yes," replied Mr. Lowell, "I kept school once."

After receiving this communication, Mrs. Burton's suspicions were thoroughly aroused. She came right to Lewiston to delve into the matter further. She hadn't been in town five minutes before she came upon Jim in Mr. Harlow's shoe store. He was doing up a package and didn't look up, although it is pretty certain he saw and recognized his mother-in-law when she entered.

"Halloo, Jim," said Sarah, "Where is Lizzie?"

"It is no place to talk here," the man answered, "let us go down street." Outside, she asked him again, and he replied, "She is in Lawrence."

"How do you know?" asked Mrs. Burton.

"A man told me."

"Who is this man?" the woman pressed. "You tell me where he is and I will see him and talk with him."

Jim Lowell could not give her any more information, except that he thought the fellow was "Charlie somebody."

It was then that Mrs. Burton went to the City Marshal and stated quite bluntly that she thought her daughter had been murdered, citing her dream as proof. But Mr. Richardson was not one to base an arrest on the stuff of which dreams are made, and the woman returned to East Holden unsatisfied.

One month later she had another letter from Jim:

*Lewiston Sept 5*

*Dear muther.*

*I thought I would rite you a few Lines to Let you no that I am well and hope these few Lines will find you the Same I had a Leter from Lizza She wanted to nowe if I would Live with her again I dont think will any body done as She has I rote to her yesterday and told her not to rite to me again the Cars was just going out of the depot wehn I got there I am going away to work*

*So good By.*

*from James M. Lowell*

Jim did "go away to work" after that. He packed his belongings and went to Lawrence, Massachusetts, where he

subsequently married and bought himself a farm. The mystery of Lizzie Lowell's disappearance lost its edge as the years passed. It was almost forgotten on that October day in 1873, when Farmer John Small, on his logging trip up on Switzerland Road, stumbled across the weathered skeleton. Then it all came back. County Attorney George Wing jogged a few memories and Lewiston remembered every detail of Jim Lowell's strange antics following his wife's disappearance.

## [ 3 ]

In spite of the fact that many witnesses had to be rounded up, and much remained to be proved, Mr. Wing had City Marshal Richardson order the immediate arrest of Jim Lowell. An officer named Wiggin was dispatched to Lawrence to pick him up, and arrived at the farm the next morning just as Jim was coming in from town with a wagon load of feed. Jim knew the policeman and recognized him right off.

"Good morning, Jim," said Mr. Wiggin.

Jim replied in kind and stepped down from the wagon. The officer handed him a copy of the *Boston Journal* for October 17, 1873, in which there was a full account of the finding of the bones. "What do you know about this?" he asked.

Jim Lowell took the paper, scanned it, and "dropped his head so low" that the officer could not see his eyes. "Where is the head?" asked Mr. Wiggin.

"I don't know," Jim answered. The officer then asked him a number of questions regarding Lizzie's whereabouts, to which Jim gave vague answers. He was then placed under arrest and brought back to Lewiston to go on trial for the murder of his former wife.

Lewiston was agog. Jim Lowell was the center of attention for several months while evidence was being gathered for the forthcoming trial. The prisoner was arraigned on January 24, 1874. On the 10th of February, the Supreme

Judicial Court of Androscoggin County met to pass judgment on the prisoner.

It was a nine day trial, and Jim denied his guilt to the last. But Prosecutor Plaisted had little trouble proving his case. The dress found on the corpse was promptly recognized by any number of ladies as the same one Lizzie had worn on the day of the fire. An important point was the fact that the buttonholes were cut round, the size of the buttons, and whipped around the edges, instead of the usual button-hole stitch. This touch of individuality was unique with Lizzie, and many witnesses so testified. Various ornaments found around the skeleton were easily identified as trinkets the missing woman had worn. So there was no question that the skeleton represented the last mortal remains of Lizzie Lowell.\*

It was pointed out that Jim was the last person to be seen with Lizzie, and perilously close to the crime scene, at that. It was further proven that he wrote all the "Lizzie" letters to convey the impression that the woman was still alive. His contradictory reports concerning her whereabouts were brought to bear against him. Furthermore, Jim Lowell was unable to account for his actions during the vital hours between six thirty and nine o'clock on the fatal night.

The verdict of the jury was that Jim was guilty of murder in the first degree, and on the 6th of May he was sentenced by Judge Charles W. Walton to die in the State Prison at Thomaston. Jim's only comment when one of his guards expressed sympathy was: "I haven't got through with them bastards yet."

The *Lewiston Journal* followed him through his incarceration while awaiting execution and noticed that "at times he was jolly—even hilarious, often pirouetting over the cor-

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\* The prosecution left no stone unturned in its effort to identify the remains beyond a glimmer of doubt. They did an excellent job and someone later observed to Judge Walton that the identification was "remarkable." "Remarkable!" snorted the Judge. "It was complete!"

ridors as if the music of innumerable waltzes vibrated in his ears." His jokes with the turnkey and prisoners were "wanton and endless" and the manner in which he alluded to some of the chief witnesses against him were "not only garrulous, but incapable of repetition."

This gaiety appears to have left him as the fatal day drew near, and at last, in a fit of remorse, he made a confession of the crime. Ordinarily, after conviction for murder, confessions prove more detrimental than helpful to a prisoner. But Jim Lowell made a ripple in legal history when his recounting of the crime worked to his advantage. Undoubtedly it was the sincerity with which he told his story and not the story itself, that profitted him.

They were riding up Switzerland Road on the fatal night, he said, when they "set to quarreling" over Lizzie's flirtation with her circus man. During the course of their squabble, Jim got good and mad and "hit her a whack." At that instant, he claimed, the horse reared up, and the blow was just sufficient to knock Lizzie off balance. She was thrown out of the wagon, over the seat backwards, "and her neck was broke."

"My first thought was to return to the city and report my wife's death," said Jim. He explained that fright got the better of him, and he concealed the body in the woods, where it was later found. What became of the head, he did not know.\*

Many accounts of Lizzie's murder are seriously in error, for they end with the execution of Jim Lowell. Although the date was set for his death, the noose never encircled Jim's neck. On the basis of his confession, a stay of execution was granted and the man's lawyers went to work with hammer and tongs. They succeeded in obtaining commutation of sentence, and when James Lowell went to Thomaston, it was

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\* A great mystery was made of the missing head, but it is logical enough to conclude that it was carried off by some animal. Most wild animals will eat only exposed flesh, refusing to poke beneath clothing. If Lizzie's vertebrae were disjointed it would make the removal of the head that much easier.

not without a ray of hope. Then, in 1899, twenty-five years later, George C. Wing, who had been so instrumental in seeing Mr. Lowell brought to trial, ploughed through endless red tape to secure from Governor Powers a pardon for the prisoner. The job was accomplished, and Lowell left the gray walls to spend his last years a free man. George Wing was Judge Wing by that time, and he astonished Maine by making this announcement a few days before Lowell's release: "Had Jim Lowell told the truth at his trial he could never have been convicted of a greater crime than manslaughter, the extreme penalty for which is 20 years." It is a point that still is being contested Down East on cold winter nights when old-timers gather together.

# Murder Wholesale

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FREDERICK A. MACKENZIE

## I

### THE PROFESSION OF ASSASSIN

ARE there men whose business is to murder by wholesale, who kill for the profit they can make from the death of their victims? Undoubtedly, yes. Several such have been discovered during the past few years. More almost certainly have not yet been discovered.

An *ishvoshtick* (cabdriver) waited each evening in the spring of 1923 among the usual ragged, shouting, eager crowd outside the Petrograd Station in the city of Moscow, watching for a likely victim. When he spotted a man emerging from the train who seemed to carry goods of value or was likely to have money on him, he offered to drive him to his destination for an absurdly low price. On the way he would start talking with his fare and would tell him that he had in his home some fine furs or some jewels, saved from the revolution, which he wanted to sell for whatever he could obtain. Usually he persuaded his victim to go straight to his house to see what he had to offer. He would ask him into his kitchen, and then would approach him from behind, his wife helping him, stifle or stun him, kill him outright and bury his body in their garden. He had, as have many people in the outskirts of Moscow, quite a big garden. He murdered at least a hundred people in this way and might have gone on still but for a little slip. He had a nephew, a lad who lived with him and who got to suspect what he and his wife were doing. One day, angered by something the nephew had done or had not done, he started to beat him. "I will tell the



police about you," the lad declared as he escaped and ran away. He hurried to the nearest station and told the astonished guardians of the law his story. They went to the house, dug up the grounds and found the remains of many people in various stages of decay.

In May, 1920, a woman in Los Angeles, California, complained to the local police that she believed her husband, J. P. Watson, was a bigamist and a criminal. She was so insistent that the police arrested the husband and searched the home finding in the man's trunks many things that aroused their suspicions—trinkets, pieces of jewelry, rings and marriage certificates. The District Attorney closely cross-examined him, but could at first learn nothing.

Seven thousand dollars' worth of Liberty Bonds were found in one of Watson's boxes. When asked how he secured possession of these, he not only explained that he had bought them at a bank at San Diego, but volunteered to take the police to the bank to prove that he had purchased them legitimately. On the journey from Los Angeles to San Diego he secretly cut his throat with a penknife, his guardians only noticing it when, as they approached their destination, he fainted from loss of blood. He seemed almost dying and was hurried to a hospital, where his life was saved by careful treatment and nursing. It was found on inquiry at the bank that he had bought the bonds, as he had said, and, as no legal evidence could be found to convict him, the District Attorney was on the point of ordering his release. Before he could do so, Watson sent for him, and after exacting a promise that the authorities would do their best to avoid his receiving a death sentence, confessed that during nine years he had contracted twenty-one or more marriages and had murdered nine of his wives.

It seemed incredible, looking at the man, that this could be true. Of medium height, quiet spoken, with a civil, almost apologetic manner, he showed no signs of cruelty or crime. The District Attorney at first thought that he must

be inventing the whole story, and this view was confirmed when a search party failed to locate the remains of one of his wives at a spot he had named. But Watson himself took them along and showed where the body was. Why the man at this stage should have incriminated himself is one of the myteries of the criminal mind. Apparently, callous though he seemed, his conscience was not dead.

He made no secret of his methods. He would advertise for a wife, using a false name and describing himself in moderately eulogistic language as a man of neat appearance and courteous disposition. "Would be pleased to correspond with a refined young lady or widow. Object matrimony. This advertisement is in good faith. All answers will be treated with respect."

He received many answers. After first finding out the financial position of the women who replied, and picking out the most affluent, he made ardent love and urged an early marriage.

Soon after the ceremony he would suggest that they should join up for business purposes, his wife putting her money with his, and the two exchanging wills each in favor of the other. The wife would be informed in the greatest confidence that he was really a secret service agent of the United States Government. This enabled him to be a great deal away from home, and, as he was usually carrying on two or three of these affairs at the same time, this was necessary. He obtained the address of the wife's relatives and persuaded her on some pretext to sign a blank paper at the bottom of the sheet, so that after he had killed her he could send typewritten letters to her relatives as though from her. Then would come a tale that he was called off abroad to Honolulu, Mexico or South America on Government service. Naturally he expected his wife to accompany him. He would get her away from her home and her friends and kill her. His methods of murder were different, from beating to death with a motor wrench to throwing her

overboard into the water, her clothes loaded with weights.

The most notorious wholesale murderer of modern times was without question Henri Désiré Landru, a middle-aged man, not of prepossessing appearance, who was convicted at the Assizes Court at Versailles on November 20, 1921, on wholly circumstantial evidence of murdering, on different occasions, ten women and one young man. He went to the guillotine a few months later, protesting almost with his last breath his innocence.

There appeared in the Paris newspapers on April 13, 1919, a couple of paragraphs which excited some curiosity. Here is the cutting from the *Petit Journal*:

#### IMPORTANT ARREST AT MONTMARTRE

The first flying squadron yesterday arrested in Paris, in the heart of Montmartre, on account of anonymous denunciations, a very elegantly dressed individual, almost bald, but with a thick black beard. This man, who is believed to have practised hypnotism to serve his own evil purposes, was being looked for by more than ten "Parquets" from every part of France, under the names of Dupont, Desjardins, Prunier, Perres, Durrand, Dumont, Morise, etc.

Once in safe custody, he declared that his real name was Henri Landru, born in Paris, in the nineteenth ward, in 1869. Landru is guilty of thefts, frauds, abuse of confidence—all of which he denies, without giving the least explanation—his only reply being, "I have nothing to say. You can fight it out with my advocate." It is quite possible, however, that before long this sorry creature will find it wiser to be less reserved, for probably he will have to reply before the magistrate for more serious faults than those with which he has been charged to-day. The heaviest charges have already been made against him.

Who was this Landru? The son of a laborer, he came from a family that had, so far as was known, no bad rec-

ord. His early years revealed no special vices or crimes. He had, while at school, worked hard and helped in the services of the church, where he became altar boy, and after leaving school went as office boy to a firm of architects. In due course he did his service as a conscript and rose to the grade of sergeant. Army life over, he married and raised a family of four children. He earned his living in various ways—for a time as a mechanic and later on as the owner of a motor garage and as a dealer in second-hand cars and in furniture. In short, up to the age of thirty his life apparently passed in ordinary fashion.

He had already, however, come in touch with some criminal gangs in Paris. Probably they had started by making use of his garage for their purposes. He came to be friends with very undesirable characters—forgers, blackmailers, cheats and *chevaliers d'industrie*. He started to imitate them without much success, for, in 1902, he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for embezzlement. After his release he was re-arrested on other charges and was convicted seven times of fraud, receiving altogether sentences of seventeen years' imprisonment. His father, who was an honest man, committed suicide, overwhelmed by the disgrace. Even during the short time Landru was at liberty, he lived largely apart from his wife and family. He had a garage at Neuilly, and rooms in different parts of Paris under different names which he used for purposes of his villainy. In short, he was altogether a bad lot, living a systematic life of crime. It speaks poorly for French detective work that this man with his criminal record could maintain distinct homes under different names, using his different addresses for blackmail and fraud, without being discovered. This is the more remarkable because he was of quite distinctive appearance, somewhat small in size, with a head too big for his body, a great black beard and very striking, deep-set eyes. He had mannerisms, too, which at once marked him out. His habits of stroking his long beard, his overweening vanity and his

shallow good nature proclaimed him in a hundred ways as a crafty, cunning, persuasive, lying, foxlike creature.

Taught by experience, Landru looked about for a safer way of earning his living than by monetary frauds which are easy to trace and severely punished. He was a ladies' man, *un homme galant*, and he found it easy to win women's affection and confidence. Like Watson, he planned to turn his love affairs to monetary profit; like Watson, too, he used matrimonial advertisements in the newspapers as his bait. He inserted an advertisement in one of the papers: "Widower with two children, aged forty-three, with comfortable income, affectionate, serious and moving in good society, desires to meet widow with a view to matrimony."

The advertisement was answered by, among others, Madame Cuchet, who received in reply a letter signed Raymond Diard, asking for an interview. When he went to see her he brought with him two little girls, who, he said, were his daughters. These just come into the picture for a moment and disappear again.

Madame Cuchet was charmed with Monsieur Diard. He was kindly, *gentil* and considerate. Nothing that he could do to please her was too much. He made love, ardent love, and wrote letters beautifully phrased and vibrating with deep emotion. He did everything possible for her son, a youth to whom she was much devoted. Madame Cuchet introduced him to her sister, Madame Friedmann, and he won her good will also.

Madame Cuchet had money, none too much, but enough to enable her to live in moderate comfort. After a time, the man confessed that he could not marry her, because he could not get free from a wife he had married earlier and was unable to divorce. He had left that wife and was condemned to a life of solitude. He so played on Madame's affections that she resolved to take pity on him and they set up house together at her expense, first near Chantilly and then at a little place, Vernouillet, on the Seine. Here Mad-

ame rented a very ordinary kind of little house with a small garage and a garden. She took her furniture there, bought fresh stocks of linen and generally equipped the home. Landru-Diard induced her to sign documents giving him the control of her furniture and effects. Then Madame Cuchet and her son André disappeared and were never seen again.

M. Diard retained possession of the house until in due course he gave it up and moved to another home in Gambais, the Villa Ermitage, owned by M. Tric, a larger place lying some three hundred yards from the main road. This house had a number of outbuildings. It cost, so said Landru afterwards, less than half the rent of the Vernouillet home. It was evidently poorly equipped, because there was not even a kitchen stove, and the newcomer had to purchase one, which he did, under the advice of the landlord. At Gambais he took the name of M. Dupont, leaving no clue, as he thought, that would connect him with the M. Raymond Diard of Vernouillet. This was just as well, for the friends of Madame Cuchet were asking questions, and the police were seeking to arrest M. Diard on suspicion of murdering Madame and her son.

Some time later a widow, possessed of a small amount of property, Mme. Buisson, went away from home with a lover to whom she was to be married, a M. Frémyet. She left an invalid boy in the care of her sister, Mlle. Lacoste. Two years afterwards the boy died, and the sister, anxious to tell of the lad's death, tried to trace Mme. Buisson. She remembered that on one occasion her sister had mentioned as a great secret that she and M. Frémyet were going to stay at the Villa Ermitage at Gambais, so she wrote to the Mayor of the place, asking if he could tell her where M. Frémyet was and how to get in touch with him. She had written to the house and received no reply. The Mayor replied that he did not know any one of that name, and that the occupant of the house was a M. Dupont. He added that he had already received inquiries from another lady who

had been trying to trace her sister, Mme. Colomb, who had been with M. Frémyet, and had also disappeared.

The two women wrote to one another and then met and talked over the matter. Each had seen this M. Frémyet, and their descriptions of him tallied. They eventually went to the police and the police set some inquiries afoot. These inquiries showed that something was wrong, and another charge of murder was drawn up against one "X", alias Frémyet, alias Dupont. But Dupont, learning that the police were after him, had by this time disappeared, and never went back to Gambais again. Before this happened, however, he had had time to conduct several other ladies to the house from which they never returned.

The Paris police came to the conclusion that M. Frémyet, M. Dupont and M. Raymond Diard must be one and the same person. A hue and cry was sent out for him all over France. They searched the house at Gambais but could find nothing suspicious in it. They set a watch to capture him on his return, but the watch waited in vain. One would have thought that Landru, for it was he, would attempt some disguise, but he did not trouble. He simply transferred himself to a fresh apartment in Paris with a fresh *amie* and went about his life in his ordinary way, not even shaving off his fine beard.

On April 11, 1919, Mlle. Lacoste was walking down the Rue de Rivoli when she saw a man entering a shop with a very charming young lady as his companion. She recognized him at once as the M. Frémyet she had met with her sister. Mlle. Lacoste did not dare to stop him, but entered the shop when he had left, and asked who he was and what his address. He had now taken the name of Guillet, and had ordered a white and gold dinner service to be sent to his home in the Rue de Rochecauart. She hurried to the police with her news. Early next morning, M. Lucien Guillet went out to purchase his morning paper and returned for his morning coffee. While he was drinking it there came a knock

at the door. Two men stepped in, caught him by the shoulders, and fitted handcuffs on his wrists, curtly telling him that he was under arrest. His latest lady love, who was with him, Mlle. Fernande Ségret, was invited to accompany him to the *dépôt*, but was not detained.

The police had been gathering together the addresses of the different houses where Landru had lived, and searched them. The house at Gambais had already been gone over but had yielded nothing. It was searched once more on April 13th with equally negative results. In a garage kept by Landru at Neuilly a number of suspicious articles were found—jewels, oddments of household furnishings and of dress that evidently belonged to different women. On Landru himself they found a little black memorandum book which was afterwards to play a great part in his conviction. In this book were eleven names and various items of expenses. The names were:

“A. Cuchet. G. Cuchet. Brésil. Crozatier. Harve. C. t. Buisson. N. Colomb. Andrée Babelay. M. Louis Jaume. A. Pascal. M. Thr. Marcadier.”

Some of the typical entries for the expenses were:

Expenses from 25 December:

2 Metro return tickets.

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| Invalides . . . .     | 0.40 |
| single . . . .        | 3.95 |
| return . . . .        | 4.95 |
| single to Tacoï . . . | 2.75 |
| return . . . .        | 4.40 |

13 March.

|                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| 2 return tickets . . . | 9.90 |
|------------------------|------|

4 April.

|                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| cab to Invalides . . .  | 3         |
| tickets . . . .         | 3.10—4.95 |
| bus . . . .             | 2.40      |
| Houdan (St. Lazare) . . | 10 fr.    |



27 April.

Acquaintance f. Pascal . . . 4.90

Biscuits malaga.

Inquiry proved that every person named in this list was an intimate friend of Landru, under one or other of his aliases. They were mostly widows to whom he had promised marriage, who had gone with him to his home at Gambais and then had disappeared, as though the earth had swallowed them. In addition, over two hundred women; mostly war widows, went to the police soon after the news of Landru's arrest was published, and told them that they had answered his matrimonial advertisements and that he had made love to them, secured control of their property, sold it and then abandoned them, leaving no trace. The police record soon showed that Landru had entered into close relations with and swindled two hundred and eighty-three women.

The prisoner was taken first of all to the country district where his crimes had been committed but was almost immediately returned to Paris, where he experienced the usual treatment of persons charged with serious crime in France—being isolated and, day and day, severely cross-examined. The case was put in the hands of M. Bonin, Juge d'Instruction, and the heads of the detective forces and police co-operated. But to all the questions of the most skilful criminal cross-examiners in France, Landru presented an impenetrable front.

He was brought up for preliminary examination late in May. "You know the charge against you," said the magistrate. "Various ladies all disappeared after telling their friends that they were going away with you." Landru admitted that he knew the ladies, but declared, "I am a *galant homme*, and I cannot allow you to ask me questions concerning them. If they have disappeared, it has nothing to do with me. It is not for me to say what has become of them.

It is for you to make the necessary search. I am innocent, I swear. When you furnish proofs, I will discuss the matter."

To most of the questions he would answer only, "I have nothing to say. I do not know anything. You charge me with crime. It is for you to prove the crime. I am an innocent man." This would continue hour after hour, until in the end the investigator would say, "You will say nothing?"

"Nothing!"

"Remove the prisoner!"

Occasionally he would make a statement. His explanation about his matrimonial advertisements was that he had seen, while traveling about the war-stricken districts, that there was great need of furniture in the homes. He advertised himself as anxious to get in touch with a widow for purposes of matrimony, simply as a ruse to discover the addresses of widows who would have furniture to sell, in order that he might buy it. It was a mere subterfuge and did them no harm.

M. Bonin pointed out that all the women whose names had been written on the leaves of his notebook had disappeared after visiting him. "This is pure coincidence," he replied. "As for Mme. Cuchet and her son, she told me in 1915 that she meant to go to England. I took her and her son to my villa at Vernouillet and left them there to rest. A few days later I returned and they were gone. Of course, I concluded they had gone to England, especially as I was aware that young Cuchet, who was seventeen, wanted to enlist in the British Army. There was no need for me to worry. I wrote once to England, to Mme. Cuchet, *poste restante*—I forget where—but I never received an answer."

A witness presented himself who professed to be able to recognize the man who had disappeared with one of Landru's victims. This witness's evidence was very weak, but it seemed to disturb Landru, and after he had been dismissed, the judge turned to the prisoner and said: "You

look as if a secret weighed heavily on your conscience. What is it? Confide in me."

"Monsieur le juge," replied Landru gravely, "I am heart-broken to think that, thanks to all this scandal, my wife knows that I have been unfaithful to her."

What was the reason, he was asked, that when he took the ladies to his home, he always, according to his little black book, took one single and one return ticket? Was it not that he knew the return would not be needed because they would never come back? Landru protested indignantly.

"These ladies were my guests. Return tickets are not available for more than one day. If I had taken return tickets for them, it would have been like saying that I expected them to go back the same night. Such a thing is not done."

He met every point with either some mild explanation or with silence. Every legal issue that was raised he fought with amazing skill, and fought so cleverly, both when under magisterial examination and in the courts, that his real trial was delayed until near the end of 1921, two years and a half after he was discovered.

The house at Gambais was gone over more closely. The grounds around it were dug up and the cement floors of the outhouses broken. A small quantity of charred human bones was found, hooks and eyes, traces of stay springs, metal rings, parts of sets of artificial teeth and the like, and were said by experts to be the remains of several women. But it must be pointed out that, between April 13th, the date of one search, and April 29th, the date of the bigger search, the house was left wholly unguarded and it was possible for any person to come in and plant bones and other human remains there in order to have them found. It was said afterwards that a village idiot had actually gone to the local cemetery, gathered up some old bones and taken them to the house. Even though some of the greatest experts in France gave evidence that these were human bones, it was impos-

sible to say with certainty that these were the remains of Landru's victims. What is more, no traces of human blood were found about the villa.

The most careful and widespread investigation of the Paris Sûreté, assisted by the police of all France, failed to give any trustworthy evidence showing what had become of these ten women and one young man. That they, or the majority of them, were killed by Landru is as certain as anything resting on circumstantial evidence can be. But to this day it has been impossible to discover how the killing was done, or how the bodies were destroyed. The theory of the police was that the victims were either poisoned or suffocated, but probably poisoned, and that the bodies were dismembered after death and burnt in the small kitchen stove. But the police evidence showed no extraordinary purchases of fuel or of poison, and to destroy bodies, so as to leave practically no trace, is a task of great difficulty. Another theory is that Landru took some of the bodies and threw them into the great furnace of a glass works, where they would be consumed and disappear. But to have done this without detection, unless he had the coöperation of one or more watchmen, would again have been so difficult as to be almost impossible.

Two or three people had at different times noticed thick smoke emerging from the chimney of the Ermitage, smoke with an atrocious and awful smell. Doctor Jean Conteilhet, who in 1916 was attached to the first Regiment of Engineers at Versailles, was one of these. While on a visit to an aunt, in May, 1916, he cycled back in the evening to Houdan to catch a train to Versailles, missed the train, and so started to cycle along the line. He was passing the road in front of the villa occupied by Landru, which he had known as the home of M. Tric, when he saw a light on the ground floor and noted, in the clear moonlight, that a thick column of smoke was issuing from the chimney. "The stench choked me, and I thought to myself, whatever can Madame Tric

be burning?" he added. There was a little motor wagonette in front of the door. Doctor Conteilhet rode on, and when he was some distance away his tire had a puncture. He set to work to mend it, but when he heard the noise of a motor approaching, thought that it might be a military wagon and that he might ask the driver to give him a lift to Versailles. The car was the one he had seen in front of the Villa Tric, and was driven by a little man with a black beard, wearing a light-colored overcoat and cap. "He carried a package, and then I heard him throw something among the rushes of the water in the pond. I thought possibly he was a poacher and took no further notice."

From the moment of his arrest Landru sprang into world-wide notoriety. In Paris his name was in every one's mouth, and passed into a phrase—"Bluebeard, the man with a hundred names and a hundred wives." They sang about him in the *café chantants* and the music halls, caricatured him in the theaters and made him the hero of innumerable little droll stories in which the Parisian delights. France became a battling ground about his innocence or guilt. Most people were so convinced that he was guilty that they refused even to argue the question. But he was not without his defenders. A number of women, in particular, regarded him as a hero and innumerable love letters poured in to his cell at the Santé Prison. His wife divorced him as soon as possible after his arrest.

## II

### THE PROCESS AT VERSAILLES

The trial opened on November 7, 1921, at the Palais de Justice in Versailles, when Landru was charged with twenty-six crimes of fraud and theft, and with the murder of ten women and one young man, whose names were given in his notebook.

First came the case of Mme. Cuchet and her son André, and then the woman whose name was given in his book as

"Brésil." The police had at first much difficulty in discovering who she was, but finally identified her as Mme. Laborde-Line, a widow, born in Buenos Aires in August, 1868, who was living with her son in France, when she suddenly disappeared, about July 10, 1915. Her neighbors told that she had made the acquaintance of a very nice man, an engineer who was going to marry her and who, as there were some difficulties about the marriage formalities with a Brazilian subject, induced her to agree to dispense with the ceremony. She went off with him and was seen no more. The neighbors, when shown the photograph of Landru, said that he was the engineer. He had returned shortly after her disappearance to fetch her furniture. The son was located and asked why he had not made inquiries about what had become of his mother. His explanation was that they had had a quarrel, and that he had written to her, but had received no reply, thought she must still be angry with him and would not approach her further.

The other cases were much the same. Mme. Pascal, who was described by Landru in his notebook as "young-looking in a tailormade costume and sombrero," was a woman of doubtful reputation, who had been divorced from her husband. She and Landru had been together for six months before he took her to Gambais (again with one single and one double ticket) in April, 1919, and she disappeared. All her family papers and other documents were found in Landru's possession.

Then there was a widow, Mme. Jaume, a religious woman. They went to church together, the church in the forest. "I always respect the religious convictions of others," said Landru airily. They knelt together in the church of the Sacré Cœur one morning, to ask a blessing on their union; in the afternoon he killed her, and in the evening he went off to his favorite sweetheart, Mlle. Ségret. A few days later he sold Mme. Jaume's furniture.

In nearly every case the women he killed owned some

property, usually a pitifully small amount. There was one exception however, Mlle. Andrée Babelay, a young maid-of-all-work, very bright and charming, who lived first in one of Landru's rooms in Paris and then was taken by him to Gambais, where she too disappeared. She certainly had no possessions for him to covet. Landru's story was that he met her in the street by chance and noticed that she was crying. He asked her what was the matter, and she told him that she had quarreled with her mother, was alone in the world and had had to leave her situation. Landru, in pity, offered to let her have the use, for a few days, of a room which he had taken in the Rue de Maubège, and which he did not occupy. According to the prosecution, her mistress had not dismissed her, but she had gone back to her, saying that she had made the acquaintance of a gentleman with whom she was going to live and who had lent her a bag to carry away her clothes. Andrée, according to Landru's account, was taken ill in the room in the Rue Maubège, and when she got better, in order to help her, he took her away to the country. She stayed with him for some time, and then went away and he heard of her no more. The prosecution suggested that she had opened a drawer containing some incriminating papers and that he had thereupon killed her. The suggestion stirred Landru to anger. "You accuse me of crimes. It is your business to prove them," he retorted.

Annette Pascal was a tall, handsome brunette who answered one of his matrimonial advertisements. One day, in April, 1918, her furniture was removed from her home and she left by train with Landru for the house at Gambais. "I will write to-morrow without fail," she told her friend, Mme. Carbonnel, as they bade one another good-by at the station. Mme. Carbonnel never heard or saw her again. But some of her goods were found after the arrest at Landru's garage.

The trial was a great spectacle, rivaling in popularity the most popular music-hall show. Costly motor cars blocked

up the streets around the court. All classes were there, but nearly all of them women, a duchess, famous actresses, noted courtesans and ordinary middle-class housewives by the hundred. There was little space for the public in the court, for there were two hundred witnesses to be accommodated, and an army of Press reporters and photographers. The witnesses, again nearly all women, showed the kind of victims Landru had selected, usually the middle-aged widow with some furniture and a few thousand francs, more or less, at her disposal, ambitious to recommence her life and to rediscover love. Very pitiful they looked, most of them. A special body of attendants did their best to control the crowds and to keep them in order, but they would not be kept in order. The spectators laughed and jeered and joked, despite the judge's protests, as though this were a spectacle arranged for its entertainment. When Landru said that one lady he was charged with killing loved him as a mother, there was a roar of mirth and almost a round of applause. "*Quel type!*" said the ladies, one to another.

Landru, standing guarded in his dock in the court, seemed a dignified and decent figure compared with these spectators. He looked smaller, frailer, gentler than people had expected. One correspondent fittingly compared his head with the silhouette of a Babylonian priest. He was carefully groomed, his beard smoothed, his face ivory white and his deep-set eyes, under heavy bushy eyebrows, looking now with wonder, now with disdain, at the crowd hungry for sensation that had come to bait him. He had previously, when being taken to or from prison, had occasion to listen to the storm of anger of the crowds, but he did not seem to fear them. The one overwhelming impression that the prisoner gave was as of a sort of calm contempt for all there, a contempt which soon revealed itself in his comments and speech.

The prosecution was in the hands of Maître Godefroy, Advocate General, a powerful and gifted lawyer; the de-



fence was entrusted to the most brilliant living member of the French Criminal Bar, the defender of Mme. Humbert and M. Caillaux—Maître de Moro-Giafferi. The judge was Conseiller Gilbert. Various interests were legally represented. One barrister, in particular, who had come up on behalf of the relatives of one of the murdered women, seemed determined to force himself into the limelight, and took every occasion to interrupt the defence, angering Maître de Moro-Giafferi at times almost beyond words.

It was clear from the beginning that the trial was to be conducted in anything but a calm, judicial atmosphere. Counsel on both sides were keyed up, ready to attack one another on the slightest excuse, with dramatic fury. Here was a great occasion, with the eyes of all the world on them, an occasion to be used to the full. In his opening statement, the prosecutor turned on the prisoner: "You are guilty, Landru, and whatever the weapons may be that your defence may bring forward, I know that I will break them."

Landru's opening statement was a demand for proofs. "For three years I have been in prison and for three years you have levelled odious accusations against me. But you have only brought words, and words are not enough. Show me your proofs. You cannot. I have always maintained my innocence. I still maintain it to-day."

A little later he burst out again: "Produce your corpses!"

When the judge cross-examined Landru, he gave back as good as he received. He taunted the police, declaring that he was arrested accidentally and never by them. In the early days of the trial he was the most possessed man in the court. While counsel stormed, he remained sternly calm. But as the days went on, spectators could not fail to notice how the trial was telling on him, how his face grew more white, his eyes more deeply sunken, how his voice took a new note of pain, and how, at times, it seemed as though he would collapse and die before the process could be finished. The spectators had no pity for him, and at

every opportunity they jibed and scoffed. But there were some at least in the court who could not but feel a sense of compassion for the man, guilty though he might be.

It was tragic to see the relics of the women he had killed brought in, the bits of furniture, the bits of clothing, the linen, the false wigs, artificial teeth, bones and shoddy jewels. Everything was spread around in the court, and even the modest kitchen stove on which he was supposed to have destroyed his victims was prominently displayed.

Different relatives and friends of the women who had disappeared came to give their testimony. One of them, a commonplace, elderly body, trembling with emotion, turned on Landru and denounced him as an assassin. Landru looked at her quietly.

"How do you know," he asked, "that your sister has not gone away, disappeared for her own purposes?"

The woman fixed her gaze on the miserable bits of furniture around.

"My sister would never, never have abandoned all her goods had she been alive," she replied.

The judge, like the magistrate, asked Landru to give some explanation of where the women had gone.

"I have enough to do with my own affairs," he said, "without explaining other people's. Why should I explain? It is for the prosecution to inquire and to learn. I am innocent. I know nothing."

Once more he made a plea of gallantry and honor, declaring that his conscience prevented him from trying to defend himself by telling things about the ladies named. He would rather suffer himself than betray them.

At each stage the Advocate General would repeat insistently the same questions.

"What have you done with the woman's furniture? What did you do with the woman's banking account? Why did you take one single and one return ticket?"

"Always the same questions," sneered Landru. "I fully

recognize, Monsieur l'Avocat Général, that you are after my head. I regret that I have not more than one head to offer you."

"How do you know that your aunt is dead?" the niece of Mme. Pascal was asked.

"My aunt would have written to me from anywhere in the world had she been alive," the niece replied, "even had she to write in her own blood."

"How do you know that your sister is dead?" another woman witness was asked.

"My sister loved you so much," she replied, turning to Landru, "that, were she alive, nothing on earth could stop her from coming to this court to defend you and stand by you."

Several of the women witnesses spoke of Landru's goodness and kindness to the murdered women. They told how attentive he had been, how courteous, how considerate and how gentle. The young woman with whom Landru was living at the time he was arrested, Mlle. Fernande Ségret, was loud in his praises. She came to court to speak for him. She told the newspaper reporters, passionately, "I have not a single reproach against him. I loved him very deeply and I still keep all my affection for him."

Maître Godefroy had a comparatively easy task, when all the evidence was over, to drive his charge home. The work before Maître de Moro-Giafferi was more difficult, but was done with amazing skill. He laughed at the absence of direct proof. They had not been able to produce a corpse, and without a corpse there could be no murder charge. They relied upon "expert evidence." He gave various instances of how expert evidence had time after time proved to be wrong—tales like that of the young soldier at Verdun, wounded and executed after court-martial because the medical experts had sworn that he had shot himself, but who was afterwards proved to have been wounded by a German bullet. He told of a small skeleton found on the beach at

St. Malo, which the doctors had said was a skeleton of a young girl killed with a knife, but which a famous painter showed was the skeleton of a chimpanzee he owned which had died and which he had thrown into the water.

Maitre de Moro-Giafferi's eloquence failed to prevent a verdict of guilty, but it did secure one thing which, under ordinary circumstances, would have saved Landru's life. The jury returned their verdict, "Guilty without extenuating circumstances," but added that, not being satisfied with the way some of the interrogations were put, they were petitioning the President of the Republic to grant a reprieve. It is only very rarely that such a petition by a jury does not secure the remission from the extreme penalty.

Landru, asked if he had anything to say before the sentence of death was passed, replied, with an air of great fatigue, "The other day it was admitted that if I had every vice and no virtue, I have at least the love of my family, of my children, and of my fireside. In the name of all that, I declare that I have killed no one."

### III

#### GUILLOTINE

There were weeks of waiting yet, weeks during which Landru's lawyers exhausted every legal means to secure a rehearing or a pardon. Landru, on his side, continued to avow his innocence.

The last morning came. During the night a number of troops, including cavalry, formed up around the prison at Versailles and barricades were built to keep people back. The occupants of houses overlooking the entrance to the prison had been warned that they must keep their windows shuttered and their doors closed. Word went through Paris that the President of the Republic had refused to extend his clemency and that the sentence was to be executed immediately. At once automobiles full of sensation seekers

hastened to Versailles to catch a last glimpse of the man.

Landru had slept uneasily. About four in the morning he woke up, complaining to the two warders in the cell with him that he was cold. They offered him an extra blanket, but he could not get to sleep again. At a quarter-past five a small procession came to the door of his cell. There was M. Béguin, representing the Advocate General, who dared not undertake the last task, the Abbé Loisel, Maître de Moro-Giafferi, the prisoner's own counsel, and others. Landru knew well what this visit meant. It was the sign that his pardon had been refused and that he was to die that morning.

"Have courage," said M. Béguin.

"I have courage," said Landru, standing up.

They offered him the glass of rum and cigarette usually given to a doomed man, but he waved them aside, for he had never been a drinker. The Abbé offered to hear his last confession. Landru smiled whimsically.

"I cannot think of keeping these gentlemen waiting," he replied.

"Have you any statement to make?" the lawyer for the state asked.

"Who is this gentleman?" Landru demanded haughtily. The lawyer was properly presented to him. "Sir," said Landru gravely, "to ask such a question of me as I am now is an insult. I have nothing to say." Then he turned to his own counsel. "Maître, *je vous remercie*," he said; "I have given you a great deal of trouble. You have had a desperate and difficult case to conduct. Ah, well! it is not the first time that an innocent person has been condemned."

Deibler, the famous executioner, was conducting operations, and two of his assistants approached to bind Landru.

"You are tying me too tight," he protested. "There is no need of it."

It was explained to him that they were only obeying regu-

lations. They cut away the top of his shirt to leave his neck clear, and would have cut away his beard.

"Trim it very lightly," he begged, vain to the last. They granted his request.

Then they led him towards the door of the prison. The guillotine was immediately outside, barely three paces away. It was a misty February morning. "I will be brave, I will be brave," those who were near heard him mutter to himself. The door was opened and he stepped out into the open. He had barely time to look up to the wooden frame, looming ominously up, before his body was pushed down and forward and the knife fell.

There came one remarkable sequel. The day before his death, Landru wrote a letter to Maître Godefroy, the Advocate General, which was printed shortly afterwards in the *Matin*. He complimented the lawyer on his talent, and discussed the trial with him, declaring that Landru saw the first signs of doubt arising about his guilt in the lawyer's mind when he gave his firm answers during the trial, and then saw that doubt grow day by day. The stove, which had been produced in court as a thrilling thing, failed to produce its effect.

"It was such a little stove! It made you frightened, my little stove, all alone there in your great hall, didn't it? Not with a fear that some might suppose, but with another fear that was all to your credit. Why could you not meet my gaze when I was brought back to the court to hear my sentence? Why did you so indignantly rebuke the crowd for its unseemly behavior? Why even to-day are you still seeking for the vanished women if you are so certain that I killed them? It was all over; sentence had been pronounced. I was calm; you were upset. Is there then a conscience that troubles uncertain judges as it ought to torture criminals? Farewell, Monsieur, our common history will doubtless die to-morrow. I die with an innocent and quiet mind. I hope respectfully that you may do the same."

**M U R D E R**  
**W I T H    M O R A L S**

*FROM THE*  
NEWGATE CALENDAR





# *Fatal Occasions*

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From the NEWGATE CALENDAR

THE REV. THOMAS HUNTER

*Executed for the Murder of Two Children,
Sons of Mr. Gordon*

THE criminal recorder has too often to detail the atrocity of ambition, the malignity of revenge, and the desperation of jealousy; but the perpetrators are generally confined to the abandoned and irreligious—the illiterate and intemperate. Their follies or former crimes account in some measure for their delinquency, and we lament their want of virtue and education: but, when we meet in the criminal catalogue with a culprit like the present—a man of education and a minister of the Gospel—guilty of a premeditated murder!—the murder of his own pupils, the sons of his benefactor!—the soul recoils with horror, and we shudder at the want of religious principle evinced in the deed; for this criminal subsequently avowed himself an Atheist.

The Rev. Thomas Hunter was born in the county of Fife, in Scotland, and was the son of a rich farmer, who sent him to the University of St. Andrew for education. When he had acquired a sufficient share of classical learning he was admitted to the degree of Master of Arts, and began to prosecute his studies in divinity with no small degree of success. Several of the younger clergymen act as tutors to wealthy and distinguished families till a proper period arrives for their entering into orders, which they never do till they obtain a benefice. While in this rank of life they bear the name of chaplains; and in this station Hunter lived about two years in the house of Mr. Gordon, a very eminent mer-

chant, and one of the bailies of Edinburgh, which is a rank equal to that of alderman of London.

Mr. Gordon's family consisted of himself, his lady, two sons, and a daughter, and a young woman who attended Mrs. Gordon and her daughter; the malefactor in question, some clerks, and menial servants. To the care of Hunter was committed the education of the two sons; and, for a considerable time, he discharged his duty in a manner highly satisfactory to the parents, who considered him as a youth of superior genius and great goodness of heart. Unfortunately, a connexion took place between Hunter and the young woman, which soon increased to a criminal degree, and was maintained, for a considerable time, without the knowledge of the family. One day, however, when Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were on a visit, Hunter and this girl met in their chamber, as usual; but, having been so incautious as not to make their door fast, the children went into the room, and found them in such a situation as could not admit of any doubt of the nature of their intercourse. No suspicion was entertained that these children would mention to their parents what had happened, the eldest boy being not quite ten years of age; but, when the children were at supper with their parents, they disclosed so much as left no room to doubt of what had passed. Hereupon the female servant was directed to quit the house on the following day; but Hunter was continued in the family, after making a proper apology for the crime of which he had been guilty, attributing it to the thoughtlessness of youth, and promising never to offend in the same way again.

From this period he entertained the most inveterate hatred to all the children, on whom he determined, in his own mind, to wreak the most diabolical vengeance. Nothing less than murder was his intention; but it was a considerable time after he had formed this horrid plan before he had an opportunity of carrying it into execution. Whenever it was a fine day he was accustomed to walk in the fields, with his pupils,

for an hour before dinner; and, in these excursions, the young lady generally attended her brothers. At the period immediately preceding the commission of the fatal act, Mr. Gordon and his family were at their country retreat, very near Edinburgh; and, having received an invitation to dine in that city, he and his lady proposed to go thither about the time that Hunter usually took his noon-tide walk with the children. Mrs. Gordon was very anxious for all the children to accompany them on this visit; but this was strenuously opposed by her husband, who would consent that only the little girl should attend them.

By this circumstance Hunter's intention of murdering all the three children was frustrated; but he held the resolution of destroying the boys, while they were yet in his power. With this view he took them into the fields, and sat down, as if to repose himself on the grass, and was preparing his knife to put a period to the lives of the children at the very moment they were busied in catching butterflies, and gathering wild flowers. Having sharpened his knife, he called the lads to him; and, when he had reprimanded them for acquainting their father and mother with the scene to which they had been witnesses, said that he would immediately put them to death. Terrified by this threat, the children ran from him; but he immediately followed, and brought them back. He then placed his knee on the body of the one, while he cut the throat of the other with his penknife; and then treated the second in the same inhuman manner.

These horrid murders were committed in August, 1700, within half a mile of the castle of Edinburgh; and, as the deed was perpetrated in the middle of the day, and in the open fields, it would have been very wonderful indeed if the murderer had not been immediately taken into custody. At the very time a gentleman was walking on the Castle-hill of Edinburgh, who had a tolerably perfect view of what passed. Alarmed by the incident, he called some people, who ran with him to the place where the children were lying

dead. Hunter now advanced towards a river, with a view to drown himself. Those who pursued came up with him just as he reached the brink of the river; and, his person being immediately known to them, a messenger was instantly dispatched to Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, who were at that moment going to dinner with their friend, to inform them of the horrid murder of their sons. Language is too weak to describe the effects resulting from the communication of this dreadful news: the astonishment of the afflicted father, the agony of the frantic mother, may possibly be conceived, though it cannot be described.

According to an old Scottish law, it was decreed that 'if a murderer should be taken with the blood of murdered person on his clothes, he should be prosecuted in the sheriff's court, and executed within three days after the commission of the fact.' It was not common to execute this sentence with rigour; but this offender's crime was of so aggravated a nature, that it was not thought proper to remit any thing of the utmost severity of the law. The prisoner was, therefore, committed to gaol, and chained down to the floor all night; and, on the following day, the sheriff issued his precept for the jury to meet: and, in consequence of their verdict, Hunter was brought to his trial, when he pleaded guilty, and added to the offence he had already committed the horrid crime of declaring that he lamented only the not having murdered Mr. Gordon's daughter as well as his sons.

The sheriff now passed sentence on the convict, which was to the following purpose: that, 'on the succeeding day, he should be executed on a gibbet, erected for that purpose, on the spot where he had committed the murders; but that, previous to his execution, his right hand should be cut off near the wrist; that then he should be drawn up to the gibbet by a rope; and, when he was dead, hung in chains between Edinburgh and Leith: the knife with which he committed the murders being stuck thro' his hand, which should be advanced over his head, and fixed therewith to the top of the

gibbet.' Mr. Hunter was executed, in strict conformity to the above sentence, on the 22d of August, 1700: but Mr. Gordon soon afterwards petitioned the sheriff that the body might be removed to a more distant spot, as its hanging on the side of the highway, through which he frequently passed, tended to re-excite his grief for the occasion that had first given rise to it. This requisition was immediately complied with, and, in a few days, the body was removed to the skirts of a small village, near Edinburgh, named Broughton.

It is equally true, and horrid to relate, that, at the place of execution, Hunter closed his life with the following shocking declaration:—

'There is no God—I do not believe there is any; or, if there is, I hold him in defiance.' Yet this infidel had been regarded as a minister of the Gospel!

A few serious and important reflections will naturally occur to the mind on perusing this melancholy narrative. Mr. Hunter was educated in a manner greatly superior to the vulgar; and he was of a profession that ought to have set an example of virtue, instead of a pattern of vice: yet neither his education nor profession could actuate as preventive remedies against a crime the most abhorrent to all the feelings of humanity.

His first offence, great as it was, could be considered as no other than a prologue to the dismal tragedy that ensued; a tragedy that was attended with almost every possible circumstance of aggravation; for Mr. and Mrs. Gordon had done nothing to him that could tempt him to any thoughts of revenge; and the children were too young to have offended him, even in intention: they simply mentioned to their parents a circumstance that to them appeared somewhat extraordinary; and which, Mr. Hunter's character and situation considered, was indeed of a very extraordinary nature: yet in revenge of this supposed affront did he resolve to imbrue his hands in the blood of the unoffending innocents.

If we reflect on the conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon in discharging the young woman who was guilty of a violation of the laws of decency, and retaining in their family the principal offender, we must own that their partiality was ill founded: this, however, must be ascribed to the veneration in which clergymen are universally held, and the particular regard that was shown towards them in Scotland at the commencement of the last century. Still, however, it is an aggravation of Hunter's crime, who ought to have been grateful in proportion as he was favoured.

It is a shocking part of Hunter's story that he was one of a society of abandoned young fellows, who occasionally assembled to ridicule the scriptures, and make a mockery of the attributes of God! Is it then to be wondered that this wretch fell an example of the exemplary justice of Divine Providence? Perhaps a fate no less dreadful attended many of his companions: but, their histories have not reached our hands.

There is something so indescribably shocking in denying the existence of that God 'in whom we live, move, and have our being,' that it is amazing any man who feels that he did not create himself can be an Atheist.

GEORGE CADDELL

*Executed for the Cruel Murder of Miss Price,
Whom He Had Seduced and Promised Marriage*

WAS a native of the town of Broomsgrove, in Worcestershire, where he was articled to an apothecary, with whom he served his time, and then repaired to London, where he attended several of the hospitals to obtain an in-

sight into the art of surgery. As soon as he became tolerably acquainted with the profession he went to Worcester, and lived with Mr. Randall, a capital surgeon of that city: in this situation he was equally admired for the depth of his abilities and the amiableness of his temper. Here he married the daughter of Mr. Randall, who died in labour of her first child.

After this melancholy event he went to reside at Litchfield, and continued upwards of two years with Mr. Dean, a surgeon of that place. During his residence here he courted Mr. Dean's daughter, to whom he would probably have been married but for the commission of the following crime, which cost him his life:

A young lady, named Elizabeth Price, who had been seduced by an officer in the army, lived near Mr. Caddell's place of residence, and, after her misfortune, supported herself by her skill in needle-work. Caddell becoming acquainted with her, a considerable degree of intimacy subsisted between them; and Miss Price, degraded as she was by the unfortunate step she had taken, still thought herself an equal match for one of Mr. Caddell's rank of life.

As pregnancy was shortly the consequence of their intimacy, she repeatedly urged him to marry her, but Mr. Caddell resisted her importunities for a considerable time: at last Miss Price heard of his paying his addresses to Miss Dean; she then became more importunate than ever, and threatened in case of his non-compliance, to put an end to all his prospects with that young lady, by discovering every thing that had passed between them. Hereupon Caddell formed the horrid resolution of murdering Miss Price; for he could neither bear the thought of forfeiting the esteem of a woman that he courted, nor of marrying her who had been as condescending to another as to himself.

This dreadful scheme having entered his head, he called on Miss Price on a Saturday evening, and requested that she would walk in the fields with him on the afternoon of the

following day, in order to adjust the plan of their intended marriage. Miss Price, thus deluded, met him at the time appointed, on the road leading towards Burton-upon-Trent, at a house known by the sign of the Nag's Head. Having accompanied her supposed lover into the fields, and walked about till towards evening, they then sat down under the hedge, where, after a little conversation, Caddell suddenly pulled out a knife, cut her throat, and made his escape. In the distraction of his mind, he left behind him the knife with which he had perpetrated the deed, together with his case of instruments.

When he came home it was observed that he appeared exceedingly confused, though the reason of the perturbation of his mind could not even be guessed at. But, on the following morning, Miss Price being found murdered in the field, great numbers of people went to take a view of the body, among whom was the woman of the house where she lodged, who recollected that she had said she was going to walk with Mr. Caddell; on which the instruments were examined, and known to have belonged to him. He was accordingly taken into custody, and committed to the gaol of Stafford; and, being soon afterwards tried, was found guilty, condemned, and executed at Stafford on the 21st of July, 1700.

We have no particular account of the behaviour of this malefactor while under sentence of death, or at the place of execution: yet his fate will afford an instructive lesson to youth. Let no young man, who has connexions of any kind with one woman, think of paying his addresses to another. There can be no such thing as honorable courtship while dishonorable love subsists. Mr. Caddell might have lived a credit to himself, and an ornament to his profession, if he had not held a criminal connexion with Miss Price. Her fate ought to impress on the mind of our female readers the importance of modest reserve to a woman. We would not be severe on the failings of the sex; but we cannot help observing, that a woman who has fallen a sacrifice to the arts of

one man should be very cautious in yielding to the addresses of another. One false step may be recovered; but the progress of vice is a down-hill road; and the farther we depart from the paths of virtue, still the faster we run. On the contrary, the ways of Virtue are pleasant; and 'all her paths are paths of peace.' From this story likewise the young officers of our army may learn an useful lesson: for, if Miss Price had not been debauched by one of that profession, the fatal catastrophe above-mentioned had never happened.

JOHN COWLAND

Executed for the Murder of Sir Andrew Slanning

THE crime for which this man suffered will show the danger ever to be apprehended from indiscriminate connexion with females, and a caution against intemperance.

John Cowland was the son of reputable parents, who apprenticed him to a goldsmith, but of a vicious irascible disposition. He and some other *bon-vivants* had followed Sir Andrew Slanning, Bart. who had made a temporary acquaintance with an orange-woman, while in the pit at Drury Lane playhouse, and retired with her as soon as the play was ended. They had gone but a few yards before Mr. Cowland put his arm round the woman's neck, on which Sir Andrew desired he would desist, as she was his wife. Cowland, knowing Sir Andrew was married to a woman of honour, gave him the lie, and swords were drawn on both sides; but, some gentlemen coming up at this juncture, no immediate ill consequence happened.

They all now agreed to adjourn to the Rose Tavern; and Captain Wagget having there used his utmost endeavours to

reconcile the offended parties, it appeared that this mediation was attended with success; but, as they were going upstairs to drink a glass of wine, Mr. Cowland drew his sword, and stabbed Sir Andrew in the belly, who, finding himself wounded, cried out, "Murder!" One of Lord Warwick's servants, and two other persons who were in the house, ran up immediately, and disarmed Cowland of his sword, which was bloody to the depth of five inches, and took him into custody. Cowland now desired to see Sir Andrew, which being granted, he jumped down the stairs, and endeavoured to make his escape; but, being pursued, he was easily retaken.

Cowland was instantly conducted before a justice of peace, who committed him; and, on December the 5th, 1700, he was tried at the Old Bailey, on three indictments: the first, at the common law; the second, on the statute of stabbing; and the third, on the coroner's inquest, for the murder. Every fact was fully proved on the trial; and, among other things, it was deposed that the deceased had possessed an estate of 20,000*l.* a year, and his family became extinct by his death; and that he had been a gentleman of great good-nature, and by no means disposed to animosity. On Cowland's being found guilty, sentence of death was passed on him; and, though great interest was made to obtain a pardon, he was executed at Tyburn, the 20th of Dec. 1700.

From the moment of his imprisonment to the day of his death, his behaviour was truly contrite and penitent; he professed the most unfeigned sorrow for all his sins, and gave the following account of himself: that he was the son of reputable parents, who apprenticed him to a goldsmith; that in the early part of his life he was sober and religious, studying the scriptures, giving a regular attendance on divine worship, and devoutly reflecting on his duty towards God; but that, abandoning this course of life, he became an easy prey to his own intemperate passions, and proceeded from one degree of vice to another, till at length he committed the

horrid crime for which he was justly doomed to fall a sacrifice to the violated laws of God and his country.

On a retrospect of this melancholy narrative, some reflections will occur, that, if properly attended to, may be of singular use to the reader. The dispute which cost Sir Andrew Slanning his life took its rise from his having associated himself with a woman of light character, with whom Cowland thought he had as much right to make free as the baronet: but Sir Andrew was originally to blame; for, as he was a married man, there was a great impropriety in the connexion he had formed: this, however, was no kind of justification of the conduct of Cowland, who could have no business to interfere; and his crime is greatly enhanced by his having committed the murder after an apparent reconciliation had taken place. To sum up our observations in a few words, from this sad tale let married men be taught the danger that may ensue from the slightest criminal connexion, and let young gentlemen learn to govern and moderate their passions: so may all parties live an honour to themselves, and a credit to their families and connexions.

THOMAS COOK

Murderer and Rioter, Who Caused His Own Apprehension

How frequently do we find that the guilty, in the interval of time between the commission and conviction of a crime, impelled by an infatuation beyond all resistance, introduce the subject of their crime into conversation with strangers? Many years ago a mail robber was apprehended in a remote part of Cornwall, on suspicion, from his fre-

quently speaking upon the nature and danger of plundering the public mail, and executed for that offence.

The subject of the present memoir was taken into custody at Chester, for a crime committed in London, merely from his constant relation of the riot in which he had committed the murder. Thus, by a kind of mental *ignis fatuus*, the murderer was led on to his own detection. These are the workings of conscience, that earthly hell, which torments those who, with malice afore-thought, have spilt the blood of their fellow-creatures. How very strangely did this mental agony appear in the conduct of Governor Wall, whose life shall hereafter be given. After twenty years had elapsed from the commission of the murder, and while he lived in personal security in a foreign country, his conscience afforded him no peace of mind. He voluntarily returned to London, sought his own apprehension, was convicted, and executed.

Thomas Cook was the son of a butcher, a man of reputation at Gloucester. When he was about fifteen years of age his father put him apprentice to a barber-surgeon in London, with whom he lived two years, and then, running away, engaged himself in the service of — Needham, Esq. who was page of honour to King William the Third; but his mother writing to him, and intimating, in the vulgar phrase, 'that a gentleman's service was no inheritance,' he quitted his place, and, going to Gloucester, engaged in the business of a butcher, it being the profession of several of his ancestors. He followed his trade for some time, and served master of the company of butchers in his native city; after which he abandoned that business, and took an inn; but it does not appear that he was successful in it, as he soon afterwards turned grazier.

Restless, however, in every station of life, he repaired to London, where he commenced prize-fighter at May-fair. At this time May-fair was a place greatly frequented by prize-fighters, thieves, and women of bad character. Here puppet-shows were exhibited, and it was the favorite resort of all the

profligate and abandoned. At length the nuisance increased to such a degree that Queen Anne issued her proclamation for the suppression of vice and immorality, with a particular view to this fair; in consequence of which the justices of peace issued their warrant to the high constable, who summoned all the inferior constables to his assistance. When they came to suppress the fair, Cook, with a mob of about thirty soldiers and other persons, stood in defiance of the peace-officers, at whom they threw brickbats, by which some of the latter were wounded.

Cooper, the constable, being the most active, Cook drew his sword and stabbed him in the belly, and he died of the wound at the expiration of four days. Hereupon Cook fled to Ireland, and, as it was deposed upon his trial, while he was in a public house, he swore in a profane manner, for which the landlord censured him, and told him there were persons in the house who would take him in custody for it: to which he answered, "Are there any of the informing dogs in Ireland? we in London drive them; for at a fair called May-fair, there was a noise which I went out to see—six soldiers and myself—the constables played their parts with their staves, and I played mine; and, when the man dropped, I wiped my sword, put it up, and went away."

Cook, having repeatedly talked in this boasting and insolent manner, was at length taken into custody, and sent to Chester, from whence he was removed, by writ of *habeas corpus*, to London, and, being tried at the Old Bailey, was convicted, and received sentence of death. After conviction he solemnly denied the crime for which he had been condemned, declaring that he had no sword in his hand on the day the constable was killed, and was not in company with those who killed him. Having received the sacrament on the 21st of July, 1703, he was taken from Newgate to be carried to Tyburn; but, when he had got to High Holborn, opposite Bloomsbury, a reprieve arrived for him till the following Friday. On his return to Newgate he was visited by numbers

of his acquaintance, who rejoiced on his narrow escape. On Friday he received another respite till the 11th of August, on which day he was executed.

The royal prerogative allows the king to reprieve the criminal, and, at his pleasure, afterwards to give the fiat of execution. In the case of Thomas Cook we have an example of this ill-timed lenity. When once the mind of the criminal is fortified by repentance and resignation to death, and then permitted to enjoy the anticipation of the remainder of a natural course of life through a reprieve, it is cruel to proceed to the execution of the sentence of the law.

May the fate of this malefactor have its proper effect, in teaching youth to refrain from evil company, and to associate only with those by whose instructions they may grow wiser and better; for this unfortunate man seems to have fallen a sacrifice to the low passion he had imbibed for the life of a prize-fighter.

EDWARD JEFFERIES

Executed for Murder

WAS a gentleman by birth and education; and as such, until the commission of the crime for which he suffered, ever deported himself. His crime affords a melancholy instance of the fatal effects of illicit love and jealousy.

Edward Jefferies was born about the year 1666, at the Devizes, in Wiltshire. He served his clerkship to an eminent attorney in London, and afterwards carried on business on his own account; but his father dying while he was yet young, and leaving him a considerable fortune, he entered

into too profuse a way of living, and embarked in the debaucheries of the age, which dissipated his substance.

Soon after he married a young lady of St. Albans, with whom he received a decent fortune, and might have lived in prosperity with her, but that he continued his former course of dissipation, which naturally occasioned a separation. He now associated with one Mrs. Elizabeth Torshell, with whom a Mr. Woodcock had likewise an illicit connexion. Jefferies and Woodcock had frequent debates respecting this woman, but at length appeared to be reconciled, and dined together at the Blue Posts, near Pall Mall, on the day that the former committed the murder. After dinner they went into the fields near Chelsea, and a quarrel arising between them, respecting Mrs. Torshell, Jefferies drew his sword, and before Woodcock, who was left handed, could draw his, he received a wound, of which he almost immediately died.

Woodcock had no sooner fallen than Jefferies rubbed some of his blood upon his (the deceased's) sword, took something out of his pocket, and then went towards Chelsea, where he had appointed to meet Mrs. Torshell. There were some boys playing in the fields who saw the body of the deceased, and a part of the transaction above mentioned. The body was removed to St. Martin's church-yard to be owned; and on the following day Mrs. Torshell came, among a crowd of other people, to see it, and was taken into custody on her saying she knew the murdered party, and expressed great concern at his fate.

Torshell's lodgings being searched, a number of articles were found, which she owned Mr. Jefferies had brought thither, though they appeared to belong to Woodcock. On this Jefferies was also taken into custody, and both of them were committed to Newgate. Jefferies alleged in his defence that he was at another place at the time the murder was committed: he called several witnesses to prove an alibi: but, as these did not agree in the circumstances, he was con-

victed, and received sentence of death. Mrs. Torshell was acquitted.

During the time he lay under condemnation, he repeatedly denied having committed the murder, and exerted his utmost interest to obtain a reprieve, which was at length promised, through the medium of the Duke of Ormond. On the 19th of September, 1705, when the procession towards Tyburn had reached St. Giles's, a respite met him to defer his execution till the 21st of the same month, on which day he was executed, his guilt being too apparent. At the place of execution he again denied the fact, but said he freely forgave those who had injured him, and died in charity with all men. He betrayed no symptoms of fear during the preparation for launching him into eternity.

From the case of the above wretched malefactor we may learn the dreadful consequence of living a dissipated life. If Mr. Jefferies had gone on in the way marked out for him by Providence, he might have lived in a high degree of credit and reputation; but he, like the prodigal son, wasted his substance in riotous living. However, on his marriage, he had a second chance for happiness; but, like the cock in the fable, he threw away the jewel which he had obtained in a wife.

From his connexion with Mrs. Torshell we may learn, that as it was contrary to the laws of the church, and in defiance of those of morality, so connexions of that sort ought to be particularly avoided by married men of every rank of life. The instances are comparatively few where a connexion of this kind leads to murder: but, as every such connexion is a deviation from the laws of honour, they ought carefully to be shunned by every man who has a regard to his reputation in this world, or his happiness in the next.

ROGER LOWEN

Executed for Murder

WAS a native of Hanover, where he was born about the year 1667, and educated in the principles of the Lutheran religion. His father being huntsman to the Duke of Zell, that prince sent young Lowen into France, to obtain the qualifications of a gentleman, and, on his return from his travels, he was one of the pages under the duke's master of the horse.

Coming over to England when he was between twenty and thirty years of age, the Duke of Shrewsbury patronised and procured him a place. Having thus obtained something like a settlement, he married a young English woman, with whom he lived in an affectionate manner for a considerable time; but in the year 1697, on his going abroad to attend King William at the treaty of Ryswick, he left Mrs. Lowen with her cousin, who was married to Mr. Richard Lloyd, of Turnham Green.

When Lowen returned from Holland, he became, with what justice we cannot say, extremely jealous of his wife, and he pretended to have received incontestable proof of her criminal conversation with Mr. Lloyd, for the murder of whom he was indicted at the Old Bailey, on the 20th of September, 1706, and was tried by a jury composed equally of Englishmen and foreigners.

In the course of the evidence it appeared that, on the evening previous to the day on which the murder was committed, Lowen invited Lloyd, and his wife to dine with him on the following day; that Mr. Lloyd, being obliged to go to Acton, did not come very early, at which Lowen expressed a considerable degree of uneasiness; that when he came, Lowen introduced him into the parlour with great apparent civility; that Mr. Lloyd put his sword in a corner of the room,

some time after which Lowen invited him into the garden, to see his plants after which they came together into the house, appearing to be good friends, and Lowen desired his wife to hasten the dinner; that while she went to obey his directions, Lowen drew Mr. Lloyd's sword a little way out of the scabbard, as if admiring it, and asked who was his cutler; and that while the deceased stood with his hand behind him, Lowen, stamping with his foot, drew the sword quite out of the scabbard, and stabbed Mr. Lloyd through the back; on which his wife (who was present at this horrid transaction) said to him, 'Speak to me, my dear;' but he was unable to do so; and having lifted up his eyes, groaned twice, and then expired.

Mr. Hawley, a justice of peace in the neighbourhood, passing by at the instant, Mrs. Lloyd acquainted him with what had happened; on which he examined the prisoner, who confessed his intention of having committed the murder sooner, and was only concerned lest he had not killed Mr. Lloyd.

The particulars respecting the murder being proved to the satisfaction of the jury, Lowen was convicted, and received sentence of death: in consequence of which he was hanged at Turnham Green, on the 25th of October, 1706.

While he lay under sentence of death, he was attended by Messrs. Idzardi and Ruperti, two divines of his own country, who were assiduous to convince him of the atrociousness of the crime which he had committed; and he became a sincere penitent, confessing with his last breath the crime he had committed in shedding innocent blood.

From this melancholy narrative we may learn the fatal effects of jealousy, which generally judges ill of the party accused, and always renders the jealous person miserable. Mr. Lowen was jealous of his wife; but we have no proof that there was any foundation for his suspicions. Hence let married men be taught not to indulge unwarrantable sentiments respecting that amiable sex who are the great sources of all

the comforts of life. A man may be wretched in a thousand instances which occur in life; but let him retire to the wife of his bosom, and her advice will extricate him from many a difficulty, or her consolations sooth him to bear his burdens. There is great wisdom in the following proverbs of Solomon. 'Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband does safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil, all the days of her life. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.'

Jealousy is the most dangerous passion of the mind. It generally proceeds from the extravagance of love. That jealousy which is moved by fond and sincere affection may be distinguished from the extravagance resulting from meanness and suspicion. When proceeding from real love, it must be owing to the suspicion of levity in the object, which instantly conjures up a thousand frightful phantoms. We fear that the charms which have subdued us have made the same impression on the heart of another. This is generally the foundation of jealousy in men, and is, by the immortal Shakespeare, called 'a green ey'd monster,' which, once gaining ascendancy,

'Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!'

JOHN MORGRIDGE

Executed for Murder

WE NOW present a dreadful instance of the effects of intoxication. This unfortunate man, who, through indulgence in this vice, met an untimely fate, was a native of Canterbury, whose ancestors had served the crown for upwards of two hundred years. He had been kettle-drummer to the

first troop of horse-guards for a considerable time, and would have been promoted, had it not been for the following unfortunate quarrel:—A Mr. Cope, having obtained the rank of lieutenant in the army, invited several officers to dine with him at the Dolphin Tavern, in Tower Street; and one of the parties invited Morgridge likewise to go, assuring him that he would be made welcome on the part of Mr. Cope.

When dinner was over, Cope paid the reckoning, and then, each man depositing half-a-crown, Morgridge and others adjourned to the guard-room, to which place more liquor was sent. They had not been long there before a woman of the town came in a coach, and asked for Captain Cope. Being introduced, she remained a short time, and then said, 'Who will pay for my coach?' Morgridge said 'I will;' and, having done so, he advanced to salute her; but she pushed him from her in a disdainful manner, and spoke to him in very abusive terms, which induced him to treat her with the same kind of language.

Morgridge's rudeness was resented by Cope, who took the woman's part, and a violent quarrel ensued between Cope and Morgridge, both of whom were intoxicated. This contest increased to such a degree, that they threw the bottles at each other; till at length Morgridge, inflamed with passion, drew his sword, and stabbed Cope, who instantly expired.

Morgridge, being taken into custody, was tried at the Old Bailey, July 5, 1706; but a doubt arising in the breast of the jury, whether he was guilty of murder or manslaughter, they brought in a special verdict, and the affair was left to be determined by the twelve judges.

The judges having consequently met at Serjeants' inn, the case was argued before them by counsel; when they gave an unanimous opinion that he was guilty of wilful murder, because he did not kill Cope with the weapons he was originally using, but arose from his seat, and drew his sword, which was deemed to imply a malicious intention.

Morgridge, in the interim, made his escape from the Mar-

shalsea Prison, and went into Flanders, where he remained about two years; but, being uneasy to revisit his native country, he imprudently came back to England, and, being apprehended, received sentence of death, and suffered along with William Gregg, at Tyburn, on the 28th of April, 1708.

After conviction he was truly sensible of the crime of which he had been guilty, acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and submitted to his fate with a devout wish that his misfortune might have its proper effect, in the preventing similar destruction happening to others.

This is but one instance of several that we shall have occasion to record of the fatal consequences arising from a connexion with women of abandoned characters: but for a woman of this cast, the two men who were thus sacrificed, the one to the impetuosity of passion, the other to the rigour of the law, might have lived, a credit to themselves, and an advantage to the community.

On this occasion it may not be improper to reflect on the horrid crime of seduction. The man who is guilty of seducing a modest young woman from the paths of virtue is, in some degree, an accessory to every crime she may thereafter commit.

Women in general are of natures more gentle, of dispositions more harmless, than men; yet, when the mind of a woman is once contaminated, she commonly becomes more vicious even than a man of bad character; and the amiable softness of the sex seems to be totally eradicated.

If a youth is tempted to a criminal connexion with a woman already debauched by another, let him reflect that he is but seeking to perpetuate that infamy she has acquired, and to render still baser a mind already contaminated. One would imagine that a slight degree of thought would be sufficient to restrain youth from connexions of this nature; but, unhappily, the passions are more prevalent than reason, and the connexion is made before the youth has given himself time to think of its criminality. May the case of Mor-

gridge be an instructive one; and may those who are tempted to a commission of the crimes we would reprobate receive a timely warning therefrom.

DEBORAH CHURCHILL

Executed for Murder

IN THIS case we shall disclose one of the most consummate tricks-ever played by woman to defraud her creditors; and a more effectual method cannot be resorted to. It is a satisfaction, however, that, during the perusal of the fate of Deborah Churchill, we know that Fleet marriages have long been declared illegal; and therefore the artifice cannot now be so easily accomplished. Formerly, within the liberties of the Fleet, the clergy could perform the marriage rites with as little ceremony as at Gretna Green, where, to the disgrace of the British empire, an ignorant blacksmith, or a fellow equally mean and unfit, assumes this sacred duty of the church.

Though this woman's sins were great, yet we must admit some hardship in her suffering the utmost rigour of the law for the crime for which she was found guilty, but which, at the same time, is, in the eye of the law, great as in the immediate perpetrator of a murder. Here we deem it well to observe, that any person present while murder is committing, and though he may take no part in the commission of the crime, yet, unless he does his utmost to prevent, he is considered guilty, equal with him who might have given the fatal blow.

Deborah Churchill was born about the year 1678, in a village near Norwich. She had several children by her hus-

band, Mr. Churchill; but her temper not being calculated to afford him domestic happiness, he repined at his situation, and destroyed himself by intoxication.

Deborah, after this event, came to London, and, being much too idle and too proud to think of earning a subsistence by her industry, she ran considerably in debt; and, in order to extricate herself from her incumbrances, had recourse to a method which was formerly as common as it is unjust. Going to a public house in Holborn, she saw a soldier, and asked him if he would marry her. The man immediately answered in the affirmative, on which they went in a coach to the Fleet, where the nuptial knot was instantly tied.

Mrs. Churchill, whose maiden name is unknown, having obtained a certificate of her marriage, enticed her husband to drink till he was quite inebriated, and then gave him the slip, happy in this contrivance to screen herself from an arrest.

A little after this she cohabited with a young fellow named Hunt, with whom she lived more than six years. Hunt appears to have been a youth of a rakish disposition. He behaved very ill to this unhappy woman, who, however, loved him to distraction, and at length forfeited her life in consequence of the regard that she had for him.

One night, as Mr. Hunt and one of his associates were returning from the theatre, in company with Mrs. Churchill, a quarrel arose between the men, who immediately drew their swords; while Mrs. Churchill, anxious for the safety of Hunt, interposed, and kept his antagonist at a distance; in consequence of which, being off his guard, he received a wound, of which he died almost immediately.

No sooner was the murder committed than Hunt effected his escape and, eluding his pursuers, arrived safely in Holland; but Mrs. Churchill was apprehended on the spot, and, being taken before a magistrate, was committed to Newgate.

November, 1708, at the sessions held at the Old Bailey, Mrs. Churchill was indicted as an accomplice on the act of

the first year of King James I called the statute of stabbing, by which it is enacted, that, 'if any one stabs another, who hath not at that time a weapon drawn, or hath not first stricken, the party who stabs is deemed guilty of murder, if the person stabbed dies within six months afterwards.'

Mrs. Churchill, being convicted, pleaded a state of pregnancy, in bar to her execution; and a jury of matrons, being impanelled, declared that they were ignorant whether she was with child or not. Hereupon the court, willing to allow all reasonable time in a case of this nature, respited judgment for six months; at the end of which time she received sentence of death, as there was no appearance of her being pregnant.

This woman's behaviour was extremely penitent; but she denied her guilt to the last moment of her life, having no conception that she had committed murder, because she did not herself stab the deceased. She suffered at Tyburn on the 17th of December, 1708.

From the fatal end of this woman we may gather the following lessons of instruction. Her unhappy temper induced her first husband to have recourse to strong liquors, which killed him. Hence let married women learn to keep a guard on their tempers, and always to meet their husbands with smiles of complacency and good nature. Marriage is either a heaven or a hell upon earth; according to the behaviour of the parties towards each other.

Mrs. Churchill's attachment to Hunt is a strong proof of the capriciousness of the female mind; but she is only one instance amongst thousands of a woman proving a bad wife, and entertaining an affection for a man no way worthy her regard. We wish, for the honour of the fair sex, that these instances may daily decrease; that female virtue may triumph through the land; and that every departure from it may be deemed as criminal in the eyes of the sex in general as it undoubtedly is in the sight of heaven.

GRACE TRIPP
Executed for Murder

IN THE perpetration of this horrid murder, we are greatly shocked to find base perfidy added to great cruelty in the breast of a female. In order to support the extravagance of a villain with whom this wretched woman had secret amours, she betrayed her trust, and, in hopes of concealing the crime, murdered her fellow servant.

Grace Tripp was a native of Barton, in Lincolnshire, and after living as a servant at a gentleman's house in the country, she came to London, was some time in a reputable family, and then procured a place in the house of Lord Torrington.

During her stay in this last service she became connected with a man named Peters, who persuaded her to be concerned in robbing her master's house, promising to marry her as soon as the fact should be perpetrated. Hereupon it was concerted between them that she should let Peters into the house in the night, and that they should join in stealing and carrying off the plate.

Peters was accordingly admitted at the appointed time, when all the family, except the housekeeper, were out of town; but this housekeeper, hearing a noise, came into the room just as they had packed up the plate; on which Peters seized her, and cut her throat, while Tripp held the candle. This being done, they searched the pockets of the deceased, in which they found about thirty guineas; with which, and the plate, they hastily decamped, leaving the street-door open.

This shocking murder and robbery became the general subject of conversation, and no steps were left unattempted in order to apprehend the offenders, who were taken in a few days, when, Peters having been admitted an evidence

for the crown, Grace Tripp was convicted, and executed at Tyburn on the 17th of March, 1710, at the age of nineteen years.

While she lay under sentence of death she entertained an idea that she ought not to suffer, because she did not actually commit the murder with her own hands, but only stood by while the deed was perpetrated. She confessed that an ambition of being deemed a fine lady prevailed on her to admit Peters into the house, as she thought the stolen effects would produce sufficient to dignify her with that title.

From the fate of this unhappy deluded girl two or three reflections naturally occur, not unworthy the notice of the public. In the first place, families that go out of town for the summer should never leave their plate in the care of one or two servants, particularly of the female sex; for this circumstance is at once an encouragement to robbers, and a temptation to the servants themselves to become dishonest.

The admission of Peters as an evidence against the girl, though he was clearly an offender of the first magnitude, should teach young people in general the danger of making unlawful connexions, and the folly of trusting to the fidelity of a brother thief. In this particular case it was necessary that one of the parties should be an evidence in order to convict the other; and Peters was undoubtedly pitched upon, to teach servants what an enormous crime it is to betray the trust reposed in them by their masters. We have seldom an instance of a servant convicted of robbing his or her master but they are severely punished; and indeed it is proper such convicts should undergo the utmost rigour of the law.

The folly of this young woman, in listening to the addresses of a man who persuaded her to rob her master, is truly astonishing! From her sad example let all young women be taught that there is no prospect of that person making a good husband who is not first of all an *honest man*. Let them remember that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'

ELIZABETH MASON

Executed for the Murder of Her Godmother

THIS wretched woman was born at Melton Mowbray, in Leicestershire, and, while very young, was conveyed by her friends to Sutton, near Peterborough, in Northamptonshire; from whence, at the age of seven years, she was brought to London by Mrs. Scoles, who told her she was her godmother; and with this lady and her sister, Mrs. Cholwell, she lived, and was employed in household work; but, having conceived an idea that she should possess the fortune of her mistresses on their death, she came to the horrid resolution of removing them by poison.

On Thursday in Easter-week, 1712, being sent of an errand, she went to a druggist's shop, where she bought a quantity of yellow arsenic, on the pretence that it was to kill rats. On the following morning she mixed this poison with some coffee, of which Mrs. Scoles drank, and soon afterwards, finding herself extremely ill, said her end was approaching, and expired the next day in great agonies. Mrs. Cholwell receiving no injury from what little coffee she drank, the girl determined to renew her attempt to poison her; in consequence of which she went again to the same shop about a fortnight afterwards, and bought a second quantity of arsenic, which she put into some water-gruel prepared for Mrs. Cholwell's breakfast, on the following morning. It happening, providentially, that the gruel was too hot, the lady put it aside some time to cool, during which time most of the arsenic sank to the bottom. She then drank some of it, found herself very ill, and, observing the sediment at the bottom of the basin, sent for her apothecary, who gave her a great quantity of oil to drink, by the help of which the poison was expelled.

Unfavorable suspicions now arising against Elizabeth Ma-

son, she was taken into custody, and, being carried before two justices of the peace, on the 30th of April, she confessed the whole of her guilt, in consequence of which she was committed to Newgate.

On the 6th of June, 1712, she was indicted for the murder of Jane Scoles, by mixing yellow arsenic with her coffee; and, pleading guilty to the indictment, she received sentence of death, in consequence of which she was executed at Tyburn on the 18th of June, 1712.

In the case of this malefactor we see, in a striking light, the fatal consequences of lying; for if, after she had first defrauded her mistresses, she had possessed grace sufficient to have acknowledged her crime, she would probably have been forgiven, and her repentance would have secured her peace of mind during her future life: but the concealing her faults by lying naturally led her to the commission of greater crimes, which ended in her final destruction. Of all crimes lying is one of the meanest, and ought to be studiously avoided by those who wish to be happy in this world or the next. Very true is the observation of the poet:

“But liars we can never trust,
Tho’ they should speak the thing that’s true,
And he that does one fault at first,
And lies to hide it, makes it two.”

MATTHEW CLARKE

Executed for Murder

THIS offender was the son of poor persons at St. Albans, and brought up as a plough-boy; but, being too idle to follow his business, he sauntered about the country, and committed frequent robberies, spending among women the money he obtained in this illegal manner.

Clarke had art enough to engage the affections of a number of young women, to some of whom he promised marriage; and he seems to have intended to have kept his word with one of them, and went with her to London to tie the nuptial knot; but, going into a goldsmith's shop to buy the ring, he said he had forgot to supply himself with money, but would go into the country and fetch it.

The young woman staid in town while he went to Wilsden Green, with a view to commit a robbery, that he might replenish his pocket. As it was now the season of haymaking, he met a man, who, wondering that he should be idle, gave him employment. Besides the business of farming, his employer kept a public house, and had a servant maid, whom Clarke had formerly courted.

The villain, leaving his fellow-labourers in the field, went to the house, and, finding only the girl at home, conversed with her some time; but, having determined to rob his employer, he thought he could not do it securely without murdering her; and, while she was gone to draw him some beer, he pulled out his knife for this horrid purpose; and, when she entered the room, he got up to kiss her, thinking to have then perpetrated the deed, but his conscience prevented him: on this he sat down, and talked with her some time longer, when he got up, and, again kissing her, cut her throat in the same instant.

Hereupon she fell down, and attempted to crawl to the door, while the blood streamed from her throat; on which the villain cut her neck to the bone, and, robbing the house of a small sum, ran off towards London, under all the agonizing tortures of a wounded conscience.

Tyburn being in his way to town, he was so terrified at the sight of the gallows, that he went back a considerable distance, till, meeting a waggon, he offered his service in driving, thinking that his being in employment might prevent his being suspected in case of a pursuit. But he had not gone far before some persons rode up, and asked him if he had

seen a man who might be suspected of a murder. He seemed so terrified by the question that the parties could not help noticing his agitation, and, on a close inspection, they found some congealed blood on his clothes, to account for which he said he had quarrelled and fought with a soldier on the road.

Being taken into custody, he soon acknowledged his crime, and, being carried before a magistrate, he was committed to Newgate; and, when brought to trial, he pleaded guilty: in consequence of which he was executed at Tyburn on the 28th of July, 1721, and then hung in chains near the spot where he committed the murder.

There is something dreadfully enormous in the crime for which this man suffered. When under sentence of death he was one of the most miserable wretches that ever endured a situation so calamitous. Nor is this to be wondered at; for the murder he committed was one of the most unprovoked imaginable. It is probable, from the affection the poor girl had for him, that she would have lent him a greater sum than he obtained by cutting her throat.

His terrors at the sight of the gallows should teach those who are prompted to iniquity to avoid all crimes that may lead to a fatal end. The wicked can never be happy; and it is only by a life of integrity, virtue, and piety, that we can hope for the blessing of God, the applause of a good conscience, and 'that peace of mind which passeth all understanding.'

Wife's Progress



From the NEWGATE CALENDAR

CATHERINE HAYES

Burnt Alive for the Murder of Her Husband

WE GIVE the history of the enormous sins and dreadful sufferings of this abominable woman just as they came to our hands—altogether too shocking for a single comment.

Catherine Hayes was the daughter of a poor man of the name of Hall, who lived near Birmingham. She remained with her parents till she was about fifteen years old, and then, having a dispute with her mother, left her home, and set out with a view of going to London. Her person being rather engaging, some officers in the army, who met with her on the road, prevailed on her to accompany them to their quarters at Great Ombersley, in Worcestershire, where she remained with them a considerable time.—On being dismissed by these officers, she strolled about the country, till, arriving at the house of Mr. Hayes, a farmer, in Warwickshire, the farmer's wife hired her as a servant. When she had continued a short time in this service, Mr. Hayes's son fell violently in love with her, and a private marriage took place, which was managed in the following manner: Catherine left the house early in the morning, and the younger Hayes, being a carpenter, prevailed on his mother to let him have some money to buy tools; but as soon as he had got it he set out, and, meeting his sweetheart at a place they had agreed on, they went to Worcester, where the nuptial rites were celebrated. At this time it happened that the officers by whom she had been seduced were at Worcester; and,

hearing of her marriage, they caused young Hayes to be taken out of bed from his wife, under pretence that he had enlisted in the army. Thus situated, he was compelled to send an account of the whole transaction to his father, who, though offended with his son for the rash step he had taken, went to a magistrate, who attended him to Worcester, and demanded by what authority the young man was detained. The officers endeavoured to excuse their conduct; but the magistrate threatening to commit them to prison if they did not release him, the young fellow immediately obtained his liberty. The father, irritated at the imprudent conduct of his son, severely censured his proceedings; but, considering that what was passed could not be recalled, had good sense enough not to persevere in his opposition to an unavoidable event.—Mr. Hayes now furnished his son with money to begin business for himself; and the young couple were in a thriving way, and appeared to live in harmony; but Mrs. Hayes, being naturally of a restless disposition, prevailed on her husband to enlist for a soldier. The regiment in which he served being ordered to the Isle of Wight, Catherine followed him thither. He had not been long there before his father procured his discharge, which, as it happened in the time of war, was attended with an expense of 60*l.* On the return of young Hayes and his wife, the father gave them an estate of 10*l.* per annum, to which he afterwards added another of 16*l.* which, with the profit of their trade, would have been amply sufficient for their support. The husband bore the character of an honest well-disposed man; he treated his wife very indulgently, yet she constantly complained of the covetousness of his disposition; but *he* had much more reason to complain of *her* disposition, for she was turbulent, quarrelsome, and perpetually exciting disputes among her neighbors. The elder Mr. H. observing with concern how unfortunately his son was matched, advised him to leave her, and settle in some place where she might not find him. Such, however, was his attachment to her, that he

could not comply with this advice; and she had the power of persuading him to come to London, after they had been married about six years. On their arrival in the metropolis, Mr. Hayes took a house, part of which he let in lodgings, and opened a shop in the chandlery and coal trade, in which he was as successful as he could have wished. Exclusive of his profit by shopkeeping, he acquired a great deal of money by lending small sums on pledges, for at this time the trade of pawnbroking was followed by any one at pleasure, it having been then subjected to no regulation. Mrs. Hayes's conduct in London was still more reprehensible than it had been in the country. The chief pleasure of her life consisted in creating and encouraging quarrels among her neighbors; and, indeed, her unhappy temper discovered itself on every occasion. Sometimes she would speak of her husband, to his acquaintance, in terms of great tenderness and respect; and at other times she would represent him to her female associates as a compound of every thing that was contemptible in human nature. On a particular occasion, she told a woman of her acquaintance that she should think it no more sin to murder him than to kill a dog. At length her husband, finding she made perpetual disturbances in the neighbourhood, thought it prudent to remove to Tottenham Court Road, where he carried on his former business; but not being as successful here as he could have wished, he took another house in Tyburn Road, since called Oxford Road. Here he continued his practice of lending small sums of money on pledges, till, having acquired a decent competency, he left off housekeeping, and hired lodgings near the same spot.—Thomas Billings, a journeyman tailor, and a supposed son of Mrs. Hayes by her former connexions, lodged in the house with Mrs. Hayes; and the husband having gone into the country on business, his wife and this man indulged themselves in every species of extravagance. On Hayes's return some of his neighbours told him how his wife had been wasting his substance, on which he severely censured her con-

duct, and, a quarrel arising between them, they proceeded from words to blows. It was commonly thought that she formed the resolution of murdering him at this time, as the quarrel happened only six weeks before his fatal exit. She now began to sound the disposition of Billings, to whom she said it was impossible for her to live longer with her husband; and she urged all possible arguments to prevail on him to aid her in the commission of the murder, which Billings resisted for some time, but at length complied.

At this period Thomas Wood, an acquaintance of Mr. Hayes, arrived from the country; and, as he was apprehensive of being impressed, Hayes kindly took him into his house, and promised to use his interest in procuring him some employment. After a few days' residence Mrs. Hayes proposed to him the murder of her husband: but the man was shocked at the thought of destroying his friend and benefactor, and told her he would have no concern in so atrocious a deed. However, she artfully urged that 'he was an atheist, and it could be no crime to destroy a person who had no religion or goodness—that he was himself a murderer, having killed a man in the country, and likewise two of his own children; one of whom he buried under a pear-tree, and the other under an apple-tree.' She likewise said that her husband's death would put her in possession of 1500*l.*, of the whole of which Wood should have the disposal, if he would assist her and Billings in the perpetration of the murder. Wood went out of town a few days after this, and on his return found Mr. and Mrs. Hayes and Billings in company together, having drank till they had put themselves into the utmost apparent good humour. Wood sitting down at Hayes's request, the latter said they had drank a guinea's worth of liquor, but, notwithstanding this, he was not drunk. A proposal was now made by Billings, that, if Hayes could drink six bottles of mountain without being drunk, he would pay for it; but that Hayes should be the paymaster, if the liquor made him drunk, or if he failed of drinking the quan-

tity. This proposal being agreed to, Wood, Billings, and Mrs. Hayes, went to a wine-vault to buy the wine, and, on their way, this wicked woman reminded the men that the present would be a good opportunity of committing the murder, as her husband would be perfectly intoxicated. The mind of Wood was not yet wrought up to a proper pitch for the commission of a crime so atrocious as the murder of a man who had sheltered and protected him, and this too at a time when his mind must necessarily be unprepared for his being launched into eternity. Mrs. H. had therefore recourse to her former arguments, urging that it would be no sin to kill him; and Billings seconded all she said, and, declaring he was ready to take a part in the horrid deed, Wood was at length prevailed on to become one of the execrable butchers. Thus agreed, they went to the wine-vault, where Mrs. Hayes paid half a guinea for six bottles of wine, which, being sent home by a porter, Mr. Hayes began to drink it, while his intentional murderers regaled themselves with beer. When he had taken a considerable quantity of the wine, he danced about the room like a man distracted, and at length finished the whole quantity: but, not being yet in a state of absolute stupefaction, his wife sent for another bottle, which he likewise drank, and then fell senseless on the floor. Having lain some time in this condition, he got, with much difficulty, into another room, and threw himself on a bed. When he was asleep, his wife told her associates that this was the time to execute their plan, as there was no fear of any resistance on his part. Accordingly Billings went into the room with a hatchet, with which he struck Hayes so violently that he fractured his skull. At this time Hayes's feet hung off the bed, and the torture arising from the blow made him stamp repeatedly on the floor, which being heard by Wood, he also went into the room, and, taking the hatchet out of Billings's hand, gave the poor man two more blows, which effectually dispatched him. A woman, named Springate, who lodged in the room over that where the murder was committed, hear-

ing the noise occasioned by Hayes's stamping, imagined that the parties might have quarrelled in consequence of their intoxication; and going down stairs, she told Mrs. Hayes that the noise had awakened her husband, her child, and herself. Catherine had a ready answer to this: she said some company had visited them, and were grown merry, but they were on the point of taking their leave; with which answer Mrs. Springate returned to her room well satisfied. The murderers now consulted on the best manner of disposing of the body, so as most effectually to prevent detection. Mrs. Hayes proposed to cut off the head, because, if the body was found whole, it would be more likely to be known. The villains agreeing to this proposition, she fetched a pail, lighted a candle, and all of them going into the room, the men drew the body partly off the bed, when Billings supported the head, while Wood, with his pocket-knife, cut it off, and the infamous woman held the pail to receive it, being as careful as possible that the floor might not be stained with the blood. This being done, they emptied the blood out of the pail into a sink by the window, and poured several pails of water after it; but, notwithstanding all this care, Mrs. Springate observed some congealed blood the next morning; though at that time she did not in the least suspect what had passed. It was likewise observed that the marks of the blood were visible on the floor for some weeks afterwards, though Mrs. Hayes had washed and scraped it with a knife. When the head was cut off, this she-devil recommended the boiling it till the flesh should part from the bones; but the other parties thought this operation would take up too much time, and therefore advised the throwing it into the Thames, in expectation that it would be carried off by the tide, and sink. This agreed to, the head was put into the pail, and Billings took it under his great coat, being accompanied by Wood; but, making a noise in going down stairs, Mrs. Springate called, and asked what was the matter; to which Mrs. Hayes answered that her husband was going a journey, and, with in-

credible dissimulation, affected to take leave of him; and, as it was now past eleven, pretended great concern that he was under a necessity of going at so late an hour. By this artifice Wood and Billings passed out of the house unnoticed, and went to Whitehall, where they intended to have thrown in the head; but the gates being shut, they went to a wharf near the Horse Ferry, Westminster. Billings putting down the pail, Wood threw the head into the dock, expecting it would have been carried away by the stream; but at this time the tide was ebbing, and a lighterman, who was then in his vessel, heard something fall into the dock, but it was too dark for him to distinguish objects. The murderers, having thus disposed of the head went home, and were let in by Mrs. Hayes, without the knowledge of the lodgers. On the following morning, soon after daybreak, as a watchman, named Robinson, was going off his stand, he saw the pail, and, looking into the dock, observed the head of a man. Having procured some witnesses to this spectacle, they took out the head; and, observing the pail to be bloody, concluded that it was brought therein from some distant part. The lighterman now said that he had heard something thrown into the dock; and the magistrates and parish officers, having assembled, gave strict orders that the most diligent search should be made after the body, which, however, was not found till some time afterwards; for, when the murderers had conversed together on the disposal of the body, Mrs. Hayes had proposed that it should be put into a box and buried; and the others agreeing to this, she purchased a box, which, on being sent home, was found too little to contain it: she therefore recommended the chopping off the legs and arms, which was done; but the box being still too small, the thighs were likewise cut off, all the parts packed up together, and the box put by till night, when Wood and Billings took out the pieces of the mangled body, and, putting them into two blankets, carried them into a pond near Marylebone; which being done, they returned to their lodgings, and Mrs. Springate,

who had still no suspicion of what had passed, opened the door for them. In the interim the magistrates directed that the head should be washed clean, and the hair combed, after which it was put on a pole in the churchyard of St. Margaret, Westminster, that an opportunity might be afforded for its being viewed by the public. Orders were likewise given that the parish officers should attend this exhibition of the head, to take into custody any suspicious person who might discover signs of guilt on the sight of it.

The high constable of Westminster, on a presumption that the body might on the following night, be thrown where the head had been, gave private orders to the inferior constables to attend during the night, and stop all coaches, or other carriages, or persons with burdens, coming near the spot, and examine if they could find the body, or any of the limbs. The head being exposed on the pole so excited the curiosity of the public, that immense crowds of people, of all ranks, went to view it; and among the rest was a Mr. Bennet, apprentice to the king's organ-builder, who, having looked at it with great attention, said he thought it was the head of Hayes, with whom he had been some time acquainted; and hereupon he went to Mrs. Hayes, and, telling her his suspicions, desired she would go and take a view of the head. In answer hereto she told him that her husband was in good health, and desired him to be cautious of what he said, as such a declaration might occasion Hayes a great deal of trouble; on which, for the present, Bennet took no farther notice of the affair. A journeyman tailor, named Patrick, who worked in Monmouth Street, having likewise taken a view of the head, told his master on his return that he was confident it was the head of Hayes; on which some other journeymen in the same shop, who had likewise known the deceased, went and saw it, and returned perfectly assured that it was so. Now Billings worked at this very shop in Monmouth Street: one of these journeymen observed, therefore, to him, that he must know the head, as he lodged in Hayes's house; but Billings said he

had left him well in bed when he came to work in the morning, and therefore it could not belong to him. On this same day Mrs. Hayes gave Wood a suit of clothes which had belonged to her husband, and sent him to Harrow-on-the-Hill. As Wood was going down stairs with the bundle of clothes, Mrs. Springate asked him what he had got; to which Mrs. Hayes readily replied, A suit of clothes he had borrowed of an acquaintance. On the second day after the commission of the murder, Mrs. Hayes being visited by a Mr. Longmore, the former asked what was the news of the town; when the latter said that the public conversation was wholly engrossed by the head which was fixed in St. Margaret's churchyard. Hereupon Catherine exclaimed against the wickedness of the times, and said she had been told that the body of a murdered woman had been found in the fields that day. Wood coming from Harrow-on-the-Hill on the following day, Catherine told him that the head was found; and giving him some other clothes that had belonged to her husband, and five shillings, said she would continue to supply him with money. After the head had been exhibited four days, and no discovery made, a surgeon named Westbrook was desired to put it in a glass of spirits, to prevent its putrefying, and keep it for the farther inspection of all who chose to take a view of it, which was accordingly done. Soon after this Mrs. Hayes quitted her lodgings, and removed to the house of Mr. Jones, a distiller, paying Mrs. Springate's rent also at the former lodgings, and taking her with her. Wood and Billings likewise removed with her, whom she continued to supply with money, and employed herself principally in collecting cash that had been owing to her late husband. A sister of Mr. Hayes's, who lived in the country, having married a Mr. Davies, Hayes had lent Davies some money, for which he had taken his bond. Catherine finding this bond among Mr. Hayes's papers, she employed a person to write a letter in the name of the deceased, demanding ten pounds in part of payment, and threatening a prosecution in case of refusal.

Mr. Hayes's mother being still living, and Davies unable to pay the money, he applied to the old gentlewoman for assistance, who agreed to pay the sum on condition that the bond was sent into the country; and wrote to London, intimating her consent so to do, having no suspicion of the horrid transaction which had taken place. Amongst the incredible numbers of people who resorted to see the head was a poor woman from Kingsland, whose husband had been absent from the very time that the murder was perpetrated. After a minute survey of the head, she believed it to be that of her husband, though she could not be absolutely positive. However, her suspicions were so strong, that strict search was made after the body, on a presumption that the clothes might help her to ascertain it. Meanwhile, Mr. Hayes not being visible for a considerable time, his friends could not help making inquiry after him. A Mr. Ashby, in particular, who had been on the most friendly terms with him, called on Mrs. Hayes, and demanded what had become of her husband. Catherine pretended to account for his absence by communicating the following intelligence, as a matter that must be kept profoundly secret: 'Some time ago (said she) he happened to have a dispute with a man, and from words they came to blows, so that Mr. Hayes killed him. The wife of the deceased made up the affair, on Mr. Hayes's promising to pay her a certain annual allowance; but he not being able to make it good, she threatened to inform against him, on which he has absconded.' This method of accounting for the absence of his friend was by no means satisfactory to Mr. Ashby, who asked her if the head that had been exposed on the pole was that of the man who had been killed by her husband. She readily answered in the negative, adding, that the party had been buried entire; and that the widow had her husband's bond for the payment of fifteen pounds a year. Ashby inquired to what part of the world Mr. Hayes was gone: she said to Portugal, in company with some gentlemen; but she had yet received no letter from him. The whole

of this story seeming highly improbable to Mr. Ashby, he went to Mr. Longmore, a gentleman nearly related to Hayes, and it was agreed between them that Mr. Longmore should call on Catherine, and have some conversation, but not let her know that Ashby had been with him, as they supposed that, by comparing the two accounts together, they might form a very probable judgment of the matter of fact. Accordingly Longmore went to Catherine, and inquired after her husband. In answer to his questions, she said she presumed Mr. Ashby had related the circumstance of his misfortune; but Longmore replied that he had not seen Ashby for a considerable time, and expressed his hope that her husband was not imprisoned for debt. 'No,' she replied, 'it is much worse than that.' 'Why,' said Longmore, 'has he murdered any one?' To this she answered in the affirmative; and, desiring him to walk into another room, told him almost the same story as she had done to Mr. Ashby, but instead of naming Portugal, said he was retired into Hertfordshire, and, in fear of being attacked, had taken four pistols to defend himself. It was now remarked by Mr. Longmore that it was imprudent for him to travel thus armed, as he was liable to be taken up on suspicion of being a highwayman, and if such a circumstance should happen, he would find it no easy matter to procure a discharge. She allowed the justice of this remark, but said that Mr. Hayes commonly travelled in that manner. She likewise said that he *was* once taken into custody on suspicion of being a highwayman, and conducted to a magistrate; but a gentleman who was casually present, happening to know him, gave bail for his appearance. To this Longmore observed that the justice of peace must have exceeded his authority, for that the law required that two parties should bail a person charged on suspicion of having robbed on the highway. In the course of conversation Mr. Longmore asked her what sum of money her husband had in his possession. To which she replied that he had seventeen shillings in his pocket, and about twenty-six guineas sewed

within the lining of his coat. She added that Mrs. Springate knew the truth of all these circumstances, which had induced her to pay that woman's rent at the former lodgings, and bring her away. Mrs. Springate, having been interrogated by Longmore, averred the truth of all that Catherine had said; and added, that Mr. Hayes was a very cruel husband, having behaved with remarkable severity to his wife; but Mr. Longmore said this must be false, for to his knowledge he was remarkably tender and indulgent to her. Longmore went immediately to Mr. Ashby, and said that, from the difference of the stories Catherine had told them, he had little doubt but that poor Hayes had been murdered. Hereupon they determined to go to Mr. Eaton, who was one of the life-guards, and nearly related to the deceased, and to communicate their suspicions to him; but Eaton happening to be absent from home, they agreed to go again to Westminster, and survey the head with more care and attention than they had hitherto done. On their arrival the surgeon told them that a poor woman from Kingsland had, in part, owned the head as that of her husband, but she was not so absolutely certain as to swear that it was so, and that they were very welcome to take another view of it. This they did, and coincided in opinion that it was actually the head of Hayes. On their return, therefore, they called at Eaton's house, and took him with them to dine at Mr. Longmore's, where the subject of conversation ran naturally on the supposed discovery they had made. A brother of Mr. Longmore, coming in at this juncture, listened to their conversation; and, remarking that they proposed Mr. Eaton should go to Mrs. Hayes at the expiration of two or three days, and make inquiries after her husband similar to those which had been made by the others, this gentleman urged his objections; observing that, as they had reason to think their suspicions so well founded, it would be very ill policy to lose any time, since the murderers would certainly effect an escape, if they should hear they were suspected; and as Wood and Billings were drinking with Mr.

Hayes the last time he was seen, he advised that they should be immediately taken into custody. This advice appeared so reasonable, that all the parties agreed to follow it; and, going soon afterwards to Justice Lambert, they told him their suspicions, and the reasons on which they were founded. The magistrate immediately granted his warrant for the apprehension of Catherine Hayes, Thomas Wood, Thomas Billings, and Mary Springate, on suspicion of their having been guilty of the murder of John Hayes; and Mr. Lambert, anxious that there should be no failure in the execution of the warrant, determined to attend in person. Hereupon, having procured the assistance of two officers of the life-guards, and taking with him the several gentlemen who had given the information, they went to Mr. Jones, the distiller's (Mrs. Hayes's lodgings), about nine o'clock at night. As they were going up stairs without any ceremony, the distiller desired to know by what authority they made so free in his house; but Mr. Lambert informing him who he was, no farther opposition was made to their proceedings. The magistrate, going to the door of Mrs. Hayes's room, rapped with his cane; on which she said, 'Who is there?' and he commanded her to open the door immediately, or it should be broken open. To this she replied, that she would open it as soon as she had put on her clothes, and she did so in little more than a minute, when the justice ordered the parties present to take her into custody. At this time Billings was sitting on the side of the bed, bare-legged; on which Mr. Lambert asked if they had been sleeping together; to which Catherine replied 'No;' and said that Billings had been mending his stockings; on which the justice observed that 'his sight must be extremely good, as there was neither fire nor candle in the room when they came to the door.' Some of the parties remaining below, to secure the prisoners, Mr. Longmore went up stairs with the justice, and took Mrs. Springate into custody; and they were all conducted together to the house of Mr. Lambert. This magistrate having examined the prisoners separately for

a considerable time, and all of them positively persisting in their ignorance of any thing respecting the murder, they were severally committed for re-examination on the following day, before Mr. Lambert and other magistrates. Mrs. Springate was sent to the Gate-house, Billings to New Prison, and Mrs. Hayes to Tothill-fields Bridewell. When the peace officers, attended by Longmore, went the next day to fetch up Catherine to her examination, she earnestly desired to see the head; and it being thought prudent to grant her request, she was carried to the surgeon's, and no sooner was the head shown to her than she exclaimed 'Oh, it is my dear husband's head! It is my dear husband's head!' She now took the glass in her arms, and shed many tears while she embraced it. Mr. Westbrook told her that he would take the head out of the glass, that she might have a more perfect view of it, and be certain that it was the same. The surgeon doing as he had said, she seemed to be greatly affected, and, having kissed it several times, she begged to be indulged with a lock of the hair; and, on Mr. Westbrook expressing his apprehension that she had too much of his *blood* already, she fell into a fit, and on her recovery was conducted to Mr. Lambert's, to take her examination with the other parties. On the morning of this day, as a gentleman and his servant were crossing the fields near Marylebone, they observed something lying in a ditch, and, taking a nearer view of it, found that it consisted of some of the parts of a human body. Shocked at the sight, the gentleman dispatched his servant to get assistance to investigate the affair farther; and some labouring men being procured, they dragged the pond, and found the other parts of the body wrapped in a blanket, but no head was to be found. A constable brought intelligence of this fact while Mrs. Hayes was under examination before the justices, a circumstance that contributed to strengthen the idea conceived of her guilt. Notwithstanding this, she still persisted in her innocence: but the magistrates, paying no regard to her declarations, committed her to Newgate for trial. Wood be-

ing at this time out of town, it was thought prudent to defer the farther examination of Billings and Springate till he should be taken into custody. On the morning of the succeeding Sunday he came on horseback to the house where Mrs. Hayes had lodged when the murder was committed; when he was told that she had removed to Mr. Jones's. Accordingly he rode thither, and inquired for her; when the people, knowing that he was one of the parties charged with the murder, were disposed to take him into custody: however, their fear of his having pistols prevented their doing so; but, unwilling that such an atrocious offender should escape, they told him that Mrs. Hayes was gone to the Green Dragon, in King Street, on a visit (which house was kept by Mr. Longmore), and they sent a person with him, to direct him to the place. The brother of Longmore being at the door on his arrival, and knowing him well, pulled him from his horse, and accused him of being an accomplice in the murder. He was immediately delivered to the custody of some constables, who conducted him to the house of Justice Lambert, before whom he underwent an examination; but, refusing to make any confession, he was sent to Tothill-fields Bridewell for farther examination. On his arrival at the prison he was informed that the body had been found: and, not doubting but that the whole affair would come to light, he begged that he might be carried back to the justice's house. This being made known to Mr. Lambert, he sent for the assistance of two other magistrates, and the prisoner being brought up, he acknowledged the particulars of the murder, and signed his confession. It is thought that he entertained some hope of being admitted an evidence; but as his surrender was not voluntary, and his accomplices were in custody, the magistrates told him he must abide the verdict of a jury. This wretched man owned that, since the perpetration of the crime, he had been terrified at the sight of every one he met, that he had not experienced a moment's peace, and that his mind had been distracted with the most violent agitations.

His commitment was made out for Newgate; but so exceedingly were the passions of the populace agitated on the occasion, that it was feared he would be torn to pieces by the mob; wherefore it was thought prudent to procure a guard of a sergeant and eight soldiers, who conducted him to prison with their bayonets fixed. A gentleman, named Mercer, having visited Mrs. Hayes in Newgate the day before Wood was taken into custody, she desired he would go to Billings, and urge him to confess the whole truth, as the proofs of their guilt were such, that no advantage could be expected from a farther denial of the fact. Accordingly the gentleman went to Billings, who, being carried before Justice Lambert, made a confession agreeing in all its circumstances with that of Wood; and thereupon Mrs. Springate was set at liberty, as her innocence was evident from their concurrent testimony. Numbers of people now went to see Mrs. Hayes in Newgate; and on her being asked what could induce her to commit so atrocious a crime, she gave very different answers at different times; but frequently alleged that Mr. Hayes had been an unkind husband to her, a circumstance which was contradicted by the report of every person who knew the deceased. In the history of this woman there is a strange mystery. She called Billings her son, and sometimes averred that he was really so; but he knew nothing of her being his mother, nor did her relations know any thing of the birth of such a child. To some people she would affirm he was the son of Mr. Hayes, born after marriage; but that, his father having an aversion to him while an infant, he was put to nurse in the country, and all farther care of him totally neglected on their coming to London. But this story is altogether incredible, because Hayes was not a man likely to have deserted his child to the frowns of fortune; and his parents had never heard of the birth of such a son. Billings was equally incapable of giving a satisfactory account of his own origin. All he knew was, that he had lived with a country shoemaker, who passed for his father, and had sent him to school, and then put him

apprentice to a tailor. It is probable she discovered him to be her son when she afterwards became acquainted with him in London; and as some persons, who came from the same part of the kingdom, said that Billings was found in a basket near a farmhouse, and supported at the expense of the parish, it may be presumed that he was dropped in that manner by his unnatural mother.

Thomas Wood was born near Ludlow, in Shropshire, and brought up to the business of husbandry. He was so remarkable for his harmless and sober conduct, when a boy, as to be very much esteemed by his neighbours. On the death of his father, his mother took a public house for the support of her children, of whom this Thomas was the eldest; and he behaved so dutifully that the loss of her husband was scarcely felt. He was equally diligent abroad and at home; for, when the business of the house was insufficient to employ him, he worked for the farmers, by which he greatly contributed to the support of the family. On attaining years of maturity he engaged himself as a waiter at an inn in the country, from thence removed to other inns, and in all his places preserved a fair character. At length he came to London; but, being afraid of being impressed, as already mentioned, obtained the protection of Mr. Hayes, who behaved in a very friendly manner to him, till the arts of a vile woman prevailed on him to imbrue his hands in the blood of his benefactor.

Billings and Wood having already made confessions, and being penetrated with the thought of the heinous nature of their offence, determined to plead guilty to the indictment against them: but Mrs. Hayes, having made no confession, flattered herself there was a chance of her being acquitted, and therefore resolved to put herself on her trial, in which she was encouraged by some people that she met with in Newgate.

The malignancy of the crime with which this woman was charged induced the king to direct his own counsel to carry

on the prosecution; and these gentlemen did all in their power to convince the Court and jury that the most striking example should be made of one who had so daringly defied the laws of God and man. The indictment being opened, and the witnesses heard, the jury, fully convinced of the commission of the fact, found her guilty. The prisoners being brought to the bar to receive sentence, Mrs. Hayes entreated that she might not be burnt, according to the then law of petty treason, alleging that she was not guilty, as she did not strike the fatal blow; but she was informed by the Court that the sentence awarded by the law could not be dispensed with. Billings and Wood urged that, having made so full and free a confession, they hoped they should not be hung in chains; but to this they received no answer.

After conviction the behaviour of Wood was uncommonly penitent and devout; but while in the condemned hold he was seized with a violent fever, and, being attended by a clergyman to assist him in his devotions, he confessed he was ready to suffer death, under every mark of ignominy, as some atonement for the atrocious crime he had committed: however, he died in prison, and thus defeated the final execution of the law. At particular times Billings behaved with sincerity; but at others prevaricated much in his answers to the questions put to him. On the whole, however, he fully confessed his guilt, acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and said no punishment could be adequate to the excess of the crime of which he had been guilty. The behaviour of Mrs. Hayes was somewhat similar to her former conduct. Having an intention to destroy herself, she procured a phial of strong poison, which being casually tasted by a woman who was confined with her, it burnt her lips; on which she broke the phial, and thereby frustrated the design. On the day of her death Hayes received the sacrament, and was drawn on a sledge to the place of execution. Billings was executed in the usual manner, and hung in chains, not far from the pond in which Mr. Hayes's body was found, in Maryle-

bone Fields. When the wretched woman had finished her devotions, an iron chain was put round her body, with which she was fixed to a stake near the gallows. On these occasions, when women were burnt for petty treason, it was customary to strangle them, by means of a rope passed round the neck, and pulled by the executioner, so that they were dead before the flames reached the body. But this woman was literally burnt alive; for the executioner letting go the rope sooner than usual, in consequence of the flames reaching his hands, the fire burnt fiercely round her, and the spectators beheld her pushing away the faggots, while she rent the air with her cries and lamentations. Other faggots were instantly thrown on her; but she survived amidst the flames for a considerable time, and her body was not perfectly reduced to ashes in less than three hours. They suffered at Tyburn, May 9, 1726.

Marriage à la Mode

From the NEWGATE CALENDAR

RICHARD NOBLE

Executed for the Murder of Mr. Sayer

WE FORBEAR to comment upon that part of this shocking transaction which relates to the female sex; and happy should we be if our duty permitted us to consign to oblivion imputations upon those who were by nature formed to be the friend and comfort of man.

Richard Noble, we are sorry to say, was an attorney at law, and the paramour of Mrs. Sayer, wife of John Sayer, Esq., who was possessed of about one thousand pounds a year, and lord of the manor of Biddesden, in Buckinghamshire. Mr. Sayer does not appear to have been a man of any great abilities, but was remarkable for his good nature and inoffensive disposition.

Mrs. Sayer, to whom he was married in 1699, was the daughter of Admiral Nevil—a woman of an agreeable person and brilliant wit, but of such an abandoned disposition as to be a disgrace to her sex. Soon after Mr. Sayer's wedding, Colonel Salisbury married the admiral's widow; but there was such a vicious similarity in the conduct of the mother and daughter that the two husbands had early occasion to be disgusted with the choice they had made.

Mr. Sayer's nuptials had not been celebrated many days before the bride took the liberty of kicking him, and hinted that she would procure a lover more agreeable to her mind. Sayer, who was distractedly fond of her, bore this treatment with patience; and, at the end of a twelvemonth, she pre-

sented him a daughter, which soon died: but he became still more fond of her after she had made him a father, and was continually loading her with presents.

Mr. Sayer now took a house in Lisle Street, Leicester Fields, kept a coach, and did every thing which he thought might gratify his wife; but her unhappy disposition was the occasion of temporary separations. At times, however, she behaved with more complaisance to her husband, who had, after a while, the honour of being deemed father of another child of which she was delivered; and, after this circumstance, she indulged herself in still greater liberties than before, her mother, who was almost constantly with her, encouraging her in this shameful conduct.

At length a scheme was concerted which would probably have ended in the destruction of Mr. Sayer and Colonel Salisbury, had it not been happily prevented by the prudence of the latter. The colonel taking an opportunity to represent to Mrs. Sayer the ill consequences that must attend her infidelity to her husband, she immediately attacked him with the most outrageous language, and insulted him to that degree that he threw the remainder of a cup of tea at her. The mother and daughter immediately laid hold of this circumstance to inflame the passions of Mr. Sayer, whom they at length prevailed on to demand satisfaction of the colonel.

The challenge is said to have been written by Mrs. Sayer; and, when the colonel received it, he conjectured that it was a plan concerted between the ladies to get rid of their husbands. However, he obeyed the summons, and, going in a coach with Mr. Sayer towards Montague House, he addressed him as follows: 'Son Sayer, let us come to a right understanding of this business. 'Tis very well known that I am a swordsman, and I should be very far from getting any honour by killing you. But, to come nearer to the point in hand, thou shouldst know, Jack, for all the world knows, that thy wife and mine are both what they should not be.

They want to get rid of us at once. If thou shouldst drop, they'll have me hanged for it after.' There was so much of obvious truth in this remark, that Mr. Sayer immediately felt its force, and the gentlemen drove home together, to the mortification of the ladies.

Soon after this affair Mrs. Sayer went to her house in Buckinghamshire, where an intimacy took place between her and the curate of the parish; and the amour was conducted with so little reserve, that all the servants saw that the parson had more influence in the house than their master.

Mrs. Sayer coming to London, was soon followed by the young clergyman, who was seized with the small-pox, which cost him his life. When he found there was no hope of his recovery, he sent to Mr. Sayer, earnestly requesting to see him; but Mrs. Sayer, who judged what he wanted, said that her husband had not had the small-pox, and such a visit might cost him his life. She therefore insisted that her husband should not go; and the passive man tamely submitted to this injunction, though his wife daily sent a footman to inquire after the clergyman, who died without being visited by Mr. Sayer.

This gentleman had not been long dead before his place was supplied by an officer of the guards; but he was soon dismissed in favor of a man of great distinction, who presented her with some valuable china, which she pretended was won at Astrop Wells.

About this time Mr. Sayer found his affairs considerably deranged by his wife's extravagance; on which a gentleman recommended him to Mr. Richard Noble, the subject of our present consideration, as a man capable of being very serviceable to him. His father kept a very reputable coffee-house at Bath; and his mother was so virtuous a woman, that when Noble afterwards went to her house with Mrs. Sayer, in a coach and six, she shut the door against him. He had been

well educated, and articled to an attorney of eminence in New Inn, in which he afterwards took chambers for himself; but he had not been in any considerable degree of practice when he was introduced to Mr. Sayer.

Soon after his introduction to Mr. Sayer's family he became too intimate with Mrs. Sayer, and, if report said true, with her mother likewise. However, these abandoned women had other prospects besides mere gallantry, and, considering Noble as a man of the world as well as a lover, they concerted a scheme to deprive Mr. Sayer of a considerable part of his estate.

The unhappy gentleman, being perpetually teased by the women, at length consented to execute a deed of separation, in which he assigned some lands in Buckinghamshire, to the amount of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, to his wife, exclusive of fifty pounds a year for pin-money; and by this deed he likewise covenanted that Mrs. Sayer might live with whom she pleased, and that he would never molest any person on account of harbouring her. Mr. Sayer was even so weak as to sign this deed without having counsel of his own to examine it.

Not long after this Mrs. Sayer was delivered of a child at Bath; but, that the husband might not take alarm at this circumstance, Noble sent him a letter, acquainting him that he was to be pricked down for high sheriff of Buckinghamshire; and Mrs. Salisbury urged him to go to Holland to be out of the way, and supplied him with some money on the occasion.

It does not seem probable that Sayer had any suspicion of Noble's criminal intercourse with his wife; for, the night before he set out, he presented him with a pair of saddle-pistols, and furniture worth above forty pounds.

Soon after he was gone, Mrs. Sayer's maid, speaking of the danger her master might be in at sea, Mrs. Sayer said, 'She should be sorry his man James, a poor innocent fellow,

should come to any harm; but she should be glad, and earnestly wished, that Mr. Sayer might sink to the bottom of the sea, and that the bottom of the ship might come out.'

Not long after the husband was gone abroad, Noble began to give himself airs of greater consequence than he had hitherto done. He was solicitor in a cause in the Court of Chancery, in which Mr. Sayer was plaintiff; and, having obtained a decree, he obliged the trustees nominated in the marriage articles to relinquish, and assumed the authority of a sole trustee.

Mr. Sayer remained in Holland nearly a year, during which time Noble publicly cohabited with his wife; and when her husband returned, she refused to live with him; but having first robbed him of above two thousand pounds, in exchequer bills and other effects, she went to private lodgings with Noble, and was shortly after delivered of another child. After Mrs. Sayer had thus eloped from her husband, he caused an advertisement to be inserted in the newspapers, of which the following is a copy:

'Whereas Mary, the wife of John Sayer, Esq., late of Lisle Street, St. Anne's, went away from her dwelling-house, on or about the 23d of May last, in company with Elizabeth Nevil, sister to the said Mary, and hath carried away near one thousand pounds in money, besides other things of a considerable value, and is supposed to go by some other name: he desires all tradesmen and others not to give her any credit, for that he will not pay the same.'

While Mrs. Sayer cohabited with Noble he was constantly supplied with money; but he was not her only associate at that time, for, during his occasional absence, she received the visits of other lovers.

Noble now procured an order from the Court of Chancery to take Mr. Sayer in execution for four hundred pounds, at the suit of Mrs. Salisbury, the consequence of a judgment confessed by him, for form's sake, to protect his goods from his creditors while he was in Holland. Mr. Sayer declared

that the real debt was not more than seventy pounds, though artful management and legal expenses had swelled it to the above-mentioned sum.

Hereupon Sayer took refuge within the rules of the Fleet prison, and exhibited his bill in chancery for relief against these suits, and the deed of separation which he obtained.

In the meantime Mrs. Sayer, finding herself liable to be exposed by the advertisement her husband had caused to be inserted in the newspapers, she, with her mother and Noble, took lodgings in the Mint, Southwark, which was at that time a place of refuge for great numbers of persons of desperate circumstances and abandoned characters.

Mr. Sayer, having been informed of this, wrote several letters to her, promising that he would forgive all her crimes if she would return to her duty; but she treated his letters with as much contempt as she had done his person.

Hereupon he determined to seize on her by force, presuming that he should recover some of his effects if he could get her into his custody. He therefore obtained a warrant of a justice of the peace, and, taking with him two constables, and six assistants, went to the house of George Twyford, in the Mint; the constables intimating that they had a warrant to search for a suspected person: for if it had been thought that they were bailiffs, their lives would have been in danger.

Having entered the house, they went to a back room, where Noble, Mrs. Sayer, and Mrs. Salisbury, were at dinner: the door was no sooner open than Noble drew his sword, and, stabbing Sayer in the left breast, he died on the spot. The constables immediately apprehended the murderer and the two women; but the latter were so abandoned, that, while the peace officers were conveying them to the house of a magistrate, they did little else than lament the fate of Noble.

Apprehensive that the mob would rise, from a supposition that the prisoners were debtors, a constable was directed to carry the bloody sword before them, in testimony that mur-

der had been committed, which produced the wished-for effect, by keeping perfect peace.

The prisoners begged to send for counsel; which being granted, Noble was committed for trial, after an examination of two hours; but the counsel urged so many arguments in favor of the women, that it was ten o'clock at night before they were committed. Soon afterwards this worthless mother and daughter applied to the Court of King's Bench to be admitted to bail, which was refused them.

The coroner's inquest having viewed Mr. Sayer's body, it was removed to his lodgings, within the rules of the Fleet, in order for interment; and three days afterwards they gave a verdict, finding Noble guilty of wilful murder, and the women of having aided and assisted him in that murder.

On the evening of the 12th of March, 1713, they were put to the bar at Kingston, in Surrey; and having been arraigned on the several indictments, to which they pleaded not guilty, they were told to prepare for their trials by six o'clock on the following morning.

Being brought down for trial at the appointed time, they moved the court that their trials might be deferred till the afternoon, on the plea that some material witnesses were absent; but the court, not believing their allegations, refused to comply with their request. It was imagined that this motion to put off their trials was founded in the expectation that when the business at the Nisi Prius bar was dispatched, many of the jurymen might go home, so that, when the prisoners had made their challenges, there might not be a number left sufficient to try them, so that they might escape till the next assizes, by which time they hoped some circumstances would happen in their favour.

It being ordered that the trials should commence, Mr. Noble and Mrs. Salisbury each challenged twenty of the jury, and Mrs. Sayer challenged thirty-five. Here it should be observed that all persons indicted for felony have a right to challenge *twenty* jurors, and those indicted for petit-

treason *thirty-five*; which may be done without alleging any cause. Happily, however, the sheriff had summoned so great a number of jurors, that the ends of public justice were not, for the present, defeated.—Noble's counsel urged that some of the persons who broke into the house might have murdered Mr. Sayer, or, if they had not, the provocation he had received might be such as would warrant the jury in finding him guilty of manslaughter only.

As the court had sat from six o'clock in the morning till one o'clock the next morning, the jury were indulged with some refreshment before they left the box; and, after being out nine hours, they gave their verdict that Mr. Noble was 'Guilty,' and Mrs. Salisbury and Mrs. Sayer were 'Not guilty.' When Mr. Noble was brought to the bar to receive sentence, he addressed the court in the following words:

'My Lord,—I am soon to appear and render an account of my sins to God Almighty. If your lordship should think me guilty of those crimes I have been accused, and convicted of by my jury, I am then sure your lordship will think that I stand in need of such a reparation, such a humiliation for my great offences, such an abhorrence of my past life to give me hopes of a future one, that I am not without hopes that it will be a motive to your lordship's goodness, that after you have judged and sentenced my body to execution, you will charitably assist me with a little time for the preservation of my soul. If I had nothing to answer for but killing Mr. Sayer with precedent malice, I should have no need to address myself to your lordship in this manner. It is now too late to take advantage by denying it to your lordship, and too near my end to dissemble it before God. I know, my lord, the danger, the hell, that I should plunge myself headlong into; I know I shall soon answer for the truth I am about to say before a higher tribunal, and a more discerning Judge than your lordship, which is only in heaven. I did not take the advantage to kill Mr. Sayer, by the thought or apprehension that I could do it under the umbrage of the laws, or

with impunity: nothing was more distant from my thoughts than to remove him out of the world to enjoy his wife (as was suggested) without molestation; nor could any one have greater reluctance or remorse, from the time of the fact to the hour of my trial, than I have had, though the prosecutors reported to the contrary, for which I heartily forgive them. My counsel obliged me to say, on my trial, that I heard Mr. Sayer's voice before he broke open the door; I told them, as I now tell your lordship, that I did not know it was him till he was breaking in at the door, and then, and not before, was my sword drawn, and the wound given, which wound, as Dr. Garth informed me, was so very slight, that it was a thousand to one that he died of it. When I gave the wound, I insensibly quitted the sword, by which means I left myself open for him to have done what was proved he attempted, and was so likely for him to have effected, viz. to have stabbed me: and his failure in the attempt has not a little excited my surprise. When I heard the company run up stairs, I was alarmed, and in fear; the landlord telling me instantly thereupon that the house was beset, either for me or himself, adding to my confusion. I then never thought or intended to do mischief, but first bolted the fore door, and then bolted and padlocked the back door, which was glazed, and began to fasten the shutters belonging to it, designing only to screen myself from the violence of the tumult. When he broke open the door, and not till then, I perceived and knew he was present; and his former threats and attempts, which I so fully proved on my trial, and could have proved much fuller, had not Mrs. Salisbury's evidence been taken from me, made my fear so great, and the apprehension of my danger so near, that what I did was the natural motion of self-defence, and was too sudden to be the result of precedent malice; and I solemnly declare that I did not hear or know from Twyford the landlord, or otherwise, that any constable attended the deceased till after the misfortune happened. It was my misfortune that what I said as to hear-

ing the deceased's voice was turned to my disadvantage by the counsel against me, and that I was not entitled to any assistance of counsel, to enforce the evidence given for me, or to remark upon the evidence given against me: which I don't doubt would have fully satisfied your lordship and the jury that what happened was more my misfortune than my design or intention. If I had been able, under the concern, to remark upon the evidence against me, that Mr. Sayer was but the tenth part of a minute in breaking open the door, it could not then well be supposed by the jury that I was preparing myself, or putting myself in order to do mischief, which are acts of forethought and consideration which require much more time than is pretended I could have had from the time I discovered Mr. Sayer; for even from his entry into the house to the time of the accident did not amount, as I am informed, to more than the space of three minutes. But I did not discover him before the door gave way. I wish it had been my good fortune that the jury had applied that to me which your lordship remarked in favour of the ladies, that the matter was so very sudden, so very accidental and unexpected, that it was impossible to be a contrivance and confederacy, and unlikely that they could come to a resolution in so short a time. I don't remember your lordship distinguished my case, as to that particular, to be different from theirs, nor was there room for it; for it is impossible for your lordship to believe that I dreamt of Mr. Sayer's coming there at that time, but, on the contrary, I fully proved to your lordship that I went there upon another occasion, that was lawful and beneficial to the deceased; and I had no more time to think and contrive than the ladies had to agree or consent. If any thing could be construed favourably on the behalf of such an unfortunate wretch as myself, I think the design I had some time before begun, and was about finishing that day, might have taken away all suspicion of malice against Mr. Sayer.—Must it be thought, my lord, that I only am such a sinner that I cannot repent

and make reparation to the persons I have injured? It was denied; but I strongly solicited a reconciliation between Mr. Sayer and his lady; and if this had tended to procure me an easier access to Mrs. Sayer, it would have been such a matter of aggravation to me, that it could not have escaped the remark of the counsel against me, nor the sharpness of the prosecutors present in court: with both I transacted, and to both I appealed, particularly to Mr. Nott, to whom, but the day before this accident, I manifested my desire of having them live together again; and therefore, my lord, it should be presumed I laboured to be reconciled to, and not to revenge myself on, Mr. Sayer. Your lordship, I hope, will observe thus much in my favour, that it was so far from being a clear fact, in the opinion of the jury, that they sat up all night, and believing there was no malice at that time, told your lordship they intended and were inclined, to find it manslaughter; and, doubting the legality of the warrant, to find it special. I hope this will touch your lordship's heart so far as not to think me so ill a man as to deserve (what the best of Christians are taught to pray against) a sudden death!—I confess, I am unprepared; the hopes of my being able to make a legal defence, and my endeavours therein, having taken up my time, which I wish I had better employed. I beg leave to assure your lordship, upon the words of a dying man, that as none of the indirect practices to get or suppress evidence were proved upon me, so they never sprang from me; and I can safely say that my blood, in a great measure, will lie at their door that did, because it drew me under an ill imputation of defending myself by subornation of perjury. I would be willing to do my duty towards my neighbour, as well as God, before I die; I have many papers and concerns (by reason of my profession) of my clients in my hands, and who will suffer if they are not put into some order; and nothing but these two considerations could make life desirable, under this heavy load of irons, and restless remorse of conscience for my sins. A short

reprieve for these purposes, I hope, will be agreeable to your lordship's humanity and Christian virtue, whereupon your lordship's name shall be blest with my last breath, for giving me an opportunity of making peace with my conscience and God Almighty.'

The last request that Noble made was granted; he was allowed some time to settle his spiritual and temporal concerns, and at length suffered at Kingston, on the 28th of March, 1713, exhibiting marks of genuine repentance.

As to the women, they were no sooner acquitted than they set out for London, taking one of the turnkeys with them, to protect them from the assaults of the populace, who were incensed in the highest degree at the singular enormity of their crimes.

Little need be added, by way of reflection, to this long and interesting narrative. Those who do not see and abhor the extreme wickedness of these abandoned women are not likely to be influenced by any arguments we can use. The situation of Mr. Sayer is pitiable in a high degree. He was distractedly fond of a woman who despised him—who despised every thing that bore but the semblance of virtue.

The fate of Noble was no other than what he merited by a long and obstinate perseverance in a course of vice and ingratitude; his baseness is almost unexampled. We hope the force of the following advice of the wise king Solomon will be felt by all our readers: 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to FALL.'

MATTHIAS BRINDSEN

Executed for Killing His Wife

THIS offender served his time to a cloth-drawer, in Blackfriars, named Beech, who, dying, was succeeded by Mr. Byfield, who left his business to Brinsden, who married Byfield's widow; but how long she lived with him is uncertain.

After the death of this wife, he married a second, by whom he had ten children, some of the elder of whom were brought up to work at his business. At length he was seized with a fever so violent that it distracted him, so that he was tied down to his bed. This misfortune occasioned such a decay in his trade, that on his recovery he carried news papers, and did any other business he could, to support his family.

Going home about nine o'clock one evening, his wife, who was sitting on a bed, suckling a young child, asked him what he should have for supper. To which he answered, "Bread and cheese; can't you eat that as well as the children?" She replied, "No, I want a bit of meat." "But (said he) I have no money to buy you any." In answer to which she said, "You know I have had but little today;" and, some farther words arising between them, he stabbed her under her left breast with a knife.

The deed was no sooner perpetrated than one of the daughters snatched the infant from the mother's breast, and another cried out. "O Lord! father, you have killed my mother." The prisoner now sent for some basilicon and sugar, which he applied to the wound, and then made his escape.

A surgeon, being sent for, found that the wound was mortal, and the poor woman died soon after he came, and within half an hour of the time the wound was given.

In the interim the murderer had retreated to the house of Mr. King, a barber, at Shadwell; whence, on the following

day, he sent a letter to one of his daughters, and another to a woman of his acquaintance; and in consequence of these letters he was discovered, taken into custody, carried before a magistrate, and committed to take his trial for the murder.

When on trial, he urged, in his defence, that his wife was in some degree intoxicated, that she wanted to go out and drink with her companions, and that, while he endeavoured to hinder her, she threw herself against the knife, and received an accidental wound.

However, the evidence against him was so clear, that his allegations had no weight, and he received sentence of death. After conviction he became serious and resigned; and being visited by one of his daughters, who had given evidence against him, he took her in his arms, and said, "God forgive me, I have robbed you of your mother: be a good child, and rather die than steal: never be in a passion; but curb your anger, and honour your mistress: she will be as a father and mother to you. Farewell, my dear child; pray for your father, and think of him as favourably as you can."

On his way to the place of execution, the daughter above mentioned was permitted to go into the cart, to take her last farewell of him,—a scene that was greatly affecting to the spectators.

As some reports very unfavourable to this malefactor had been propagated during his confinement, he desired the Ordinary of Newgate to read the following speech just before he was launched into eternity.

"I was born of kind parents, who gave me learning: I went apprentice to a fine-drawer. I had often jars, which might increase a natural waspishness in my temper. I fell in love with Hannah, my last wife, and after much difficulty won her, she having five suitors courting her at the same time. We had ten children (half of them dead), and I believe we loved each other dearly; but often quarrelled and fought.

"Pray, good people, mind, I had no malice against her, nor thought to kill her two minutes before the deed; but I de-

signed only to make her obey me thoroughly, which the Scripture says all wives should do. This I thought I had done when I cut her skull on Monday, but she was the same again by Tuesday.

‘Good people, I request you to observe, that the world has spitefully given out, that I carnally and incestuously lay with my eldest daughter. I here solemnly declare, as I am entering into the presence of God, I never knew whether she was a man or a woman since she was a babe. I have often taken her in my arms, often kissed her, sometimes given her a cake or a pie, when she did any particular service beyond what came to her share; but never lay with her, or carnally knew her, much less had a child by her. But when a man is in calamities, and is hated like me, the women will make surmises be certainties.’

‘Good Christians, pray for me! I deserve death: I am willing to die; for, though my sins are great, God’s mercies are greater.’

He was executed at Tyburn, on the 24th of September, 1722.

If any credit is to be given to Brinsden’s last solemn declaration, his wife, as well as himself, seems to have been of an unhappy disposition, since they could not refrain from quarrelling, though they had a sincere regard for each other. We fear this is but too commonly the case in the married state; but it is a lamentable consideration that those who have engaged to be the mutual comfort and support of each other through life, should render the rugged path still more difficult by their mutual contentions and animosities.

It is the part of a husband to protect his wife from every injury and insult; to be at once a father and a guardian to her; and, so far from ill-treating her himself, he ought to be particularly watchful that she be not ill-used by others: the tenderer sex have a natural claim to the protection of the more robust. Indeed it would appear that one reason for

Providence bestowing superior strength on the man, was for the defence and protection of the woman.

On the other hand women should be grateful for this protection; and, in the emphatical words of St. Paul, wives should learn to be 'obedient to their husband in all things.'

Such duty as the subject owes the prince,
Ev'n such a woman oweth to her husband:
And when she's froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
What is she but a foul contending rebel,
And graceless traitor to her loving lord?

SHAKESPEARE

It is a very unfortunate circumstance when persons of opposite sentiments happen to be united in wedlock: but, even in this case, people of sense and humanity will learn to bear with the failings of each other, considering that much allowance is to be made for their own faults. They will endeavour to make the lot which has befallen them more supportable than it otherwise would be; and, in time, by the constant wish to please, they may even conciliate the affections of each other, and mutual happiness may arise where it is least expected.

In general, however, a coincidence of temper and a purity of manners, added to a sacred regard to religious duties, are the greatest security for happiness in the married state. Beautiful are the lines of the poet:

Two kindred souls alone should meet,
'Tis friendship makes their bondage sweet,
And feeds their mutual loves:
Bright Venus, on her rolling throne,
Is drawn by gentlest birds alone,
And Cupids yoke the doves.

ROBERT HALLAM

Executed for Murder

WAS a native of London, and intended by his parents for a maritime life, in preparation for which they had him instructed in navigation, and then apprenticed him to the captain of a trading vessel. He served his time with fidelity, acquired the character of an able seaman, and afterwards went on board several vessels as a mate, and was held in great reputation.

On his return to London he married a young woman, who being averse to his going again to sea, he purchased two of the Gravesend wherries, and continued to get his living on the Thames nine years.

His family being increased by several children, he took a public house, which was chiefly attended to by his wife, while he still pursued his business as a proprietor of the Gravesend boats.

The taking an alehouse was an unfortunate circumstance for Hallam; for the house being frequented by the lowest of the people, and his wife being addicted to drinking, the place was a perpetual scene of riot and confusion.

Hallam, returning from his business one evening, found his wife intoxicated: being irritated by this circumstance, he expressed his sentiments with great freedom; and she replying with some warmth, he beat her so as to leave evident marks of resentment on her face.

Hallam's son now told his father that a waterman who lodged in the house frequently slept with his mother; and some persons present likewise hinting that this was probable, from certain familiarities they had observed between the woman and the waterman, Hallam charged his wife with being unfaithful to his bed, and she confessed that she had

been so; on which he beat her in a more severe manner than before.

Not long after this he came home late at night, and knocked at the door; but, no one coming to let him in, he procured a ladder to get in at the window; when his wife appeared, and admitted him. On his asking the reason why she did not sooner open the door, she said she had been asleep, and did not hear him; but she afterwards confessed that she had a man with her, and had let him out at a back window before she opened the door to her husband.

The infidelity of Hallam's wife tempted him to equal indulgence of his irregular passions: he had illicit connexions with several women, and, in particular, seduced the wife of a waterman, which broke the husband's heart, and he died in consequence of the affair.

On a particular night Hallam came home very much in liquor, and went to bed, desiring his wife to undress herself, and come to bed likewise. She sat, partly undressed, on the side of the bed, as if afraid to go in; while he became quite enraged at her paying no regard to what he said. At length she ran down stairs, and he followed her, and locked the street-door to prevent her going out. On this she ran up into the dining-room, whither he likewise followed her, and struck her several times. He then went into another room for his cane, and she locked him in.

Enraged at this, he broke open the door, and, seizing her in his arms, threw her head foremost, and her back to the ground, so that, on her falling, her back was broken, her skull fractured, and she instantly expired. A person passing just before she fell heard her cry out 'Murder! for God's sake! for Christ's sake! for our family's sake! for our children's sake, don't murder me, don't throw me out of the window!'

We give the above circumstances as what were sworn to on the trial, in consequence of which the jury found Hallam guilty, and he received sentence of death: but the prisoner denied the fact, insisting that she threw herself out of the

window before he got into the room; and he persisted in avowing his innocence to the last hour of his life. He was executed at Tyburn, February 14, 1732.

WILLIAM ALCOCK

Executed for the Murder of His Wife

THIS unnatural and cruel man was an inhabitant of the town of Bourn, in Lincolnshire. He had been married only two years when he left his wife, who was afflicted with the palsy, giving out that his absence was in consequence of having found her in bed with another man. He travelled to Colchester, married again, and set up in his business, that of a miller, in which he was successful. He employed a man of the name of Peck as his assistant; but, upon some words arising between them, Alcock discharged him, without suffering him to complete the job he had in hand. Peck replied, 'I'll do as good a job for you; for I have heard you have a wife in Lincolnshire, and I'll travel the kingdom over till I find her, and send her to you.' Upon this he instantly set out, and bent his course in order to fulfil his threat. He inquired at every town he came to in Lincolnshire until he actually found Mrs. Alcock. In effecting this he spent nearly two years; and, to defray his expenses, he occasionally stopped for a few days to work: and, when his wages were expended in his travels, he worked again; thus persevering until he had accomplished his determined purpose. The parish-officers of Bourn, who had the maintenance of the deserted woman to provide, received Peck's information, and dispatched two of the parishioners to Colchester, with whom Alcock entered into a compromise, on the following

conditions: to pay down twenty pounds, and, within a month, thirty pounds more, and to fetch away his wife from Bourn. He accordingly arrived there on the 22d of August, 1732, on a good horse, and a new pillion for his wife to ride on behind him. He, however, tried every means to induce the officers to keep her, offering a yearly sum sufficient for that purpose; and observed that 'she was so disagreeable to him that he would rather be hanged than take her again.'

Finding his offers all rejected, he set off with her on the 24th, and on the next day the body of the unfortunate woman was discovered in a ditch under a willow-tree, near Pilsgate, in the parish of Barnack, in Northamptonshire, and about eight miles from Bourn. It appeared that she had been strangled with a small cord, which but just met about her neck; and the pillion was found a little distance from the body. The murderer immediately proceeded to Colchester, was apprehended on the 28th by officers from Bourn, and the next day fully committed to gaol.

Though convicted on the clearest evidence, yet this obdurate man, even to the last moment of his existence, denied the justice of his sentence; and his behaviour, during the short interval allowed prisoners to make their peace with God, evinced the most shocking depravity. He constantly refused the consolations of devotion, and paid no attention to the warnings of a clergyman, who at length desisted from farther exhortations. On the morning of his execution he drank to intoxication; yet, on coming out of the prison, he sent for a pint of wine, which being refused him by the sheriff, he would not get into the cart which waited to convey him to execution until the money given for that purpose was returned to him. On the road to the gallows he sung part of the old song of 'Robin Hood,' adding to each verse the chorus of 'Derry down,' etc. At intervals he swore, kicked, and spurned, at any person who touched the cart. When tied up to the fatal tree, he kicked off his shoes, to avoid a well-known proverb; and being told by a person in the cart with

him, and who wished, thus late, to reclaim him, that he had much better read and repent than thus vilely swear and sing, he struck the book out of this humane man's hands, damned the spectators, and called for wine. During the singing of psalms, and reading of prayers, this monster was employed in talking and nodding to his acquaintance; telling some to remember him, others to drink to his good journey; and with his last words he inveighed against the injustice of his sentence.

He was hanged at Northampton, March 9, 1733, amid the groans and detestation of many thousand spectators.

EDWARD JOINES

Executed for the Murder of His Wife

THE parents of Edward Joines were respectable housekeepers in Ratcliffe Highway, who, being desirous that the boy should be qualified for business, placed him under the direction of a master of a day-school in Goodman's Fields, where he continued a regular attendant about five years, but without making any considerable improvement.

Soon after he had completed his fourteenth year he was removed from the school, and his father informed him that he was endeavouring to find some reputable tradesman who would take him as an apprentice; but the youth expressed an aversion to any occupation but that of a gardener. Finding that he had conceived a strong prepossession in favour of this business, they bound him to a gardener at Stepney, whom he served in an industrious and regular manner for the space of seven years; and for some time afterwards con-

tinued with the same master in the capacity of a journeyman, his parents being so reduced through misfortunes that they could not supply him with money to carry on business on his own account.

A short time after the expiration of his apprenticeship he married a milk-woman, by whom he had seven children in the course of twenty years, during which time he lived in an amicable manner with his wife, earning a tolerable subsistence by honest industry.

His children all died in their infancy, and upon the decease of his wife he procured employment at Bromley; and, that he might lose but little time in going to and returning from his work, he hired a lodging at the lower end of Poplar, in a house kept by a widow, with whom he in a few days contracted a criminal familiarity. They had lived together about a twelvemonth, jointly defraying the household expenses, when she more frequently than usual gave way to the natural violence of her temper, threatening that he should not continue in the house unless he would marry her; which he consented to do, and, adjourning to the Fleet, the ceremony was performed.

After their marriage their disagreements became more frequent and violent; and, upon the wife's daughter leaving her service, and coming to reside with them, she united with her mother in pursuing every measure that could tend to render the life of Joines insupportably miserable. On his return from work one evening a disagreement, as usual, took place; and, being aggravated by her abusive language, he pushed her from him, when, falling against the grate, her arm was much scorched. In consequence of this she swore the peace against him; but, when they appeared before the magistrate who had granted the warrant for the apprehension of Joines, they were advised to compromise their disagreement, to which they mutually agreed.

By an accidental fall Mrs. Joines broke her arm, about a

month after the above affair; but, timely application being made to a surgeon, she in a short time had every reason to expect a perfect and speedy recovery.

Joines being at a public house on a Sunday afternoon, the landlord observed his daughter-in-law carrying a pot of porter from another alehouse, and mentioned the circumstance to him, adding, that the girl had been served with a like quantity at his house but a short time before. Being intoxicated, Joines took fire at what the publican had imprudently said, and immediately went towards his house, which was on the opposite side of the street, with an intention of preventing his wife from drinking the liquor. He struck the pot out of her hand, and then, seizing the arm that had been broken, twisted it till the bone again separated.

The fracture was a second time reduced; but such unfavourable symptoms appeared, that an amputation was feared to be necessary for preserving the patient's life. In a short time afterwards, however, she was supposed to be in a fair way of recovery; and, calling one day at the gardens where her husband was employed, she told his fellow-labourers that she had great hopes of her arm being speedily cured; adding, that she was then able to move her fingers with but very little difficulty.

The hopes of this unfortunate woman were falsely grounded; for on the following day she was so ill, that her life was judged to be very precarious. She sent for Joines from his work; and, upon his coming to her bed-side, he asked if she had any accusation to allege against him; upon which, shaking her head, she said she would forgive him, and hoped the world would do so too. She expired the next night, and in the morning he gave some directions respecting the funeral, and then went to work in the gardens as usual, not entertaining the least suspicion that he should be accused as the cause of his wife's death; but, upon his return in the evening, he was apprehended on suspicion of murder.

An inquest being summoned to inquire whether the woman was murdered, or died according to the course of nature, it appeared in evidence that her death was occasioned by the second fracture of her arm: the jury, therefore, brought in a verdict of Wilful Murder against Joines, who was, in consequence, committed to Newgate, in order for trial.

At the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey Joines was arraigned on an indictment for the wilful murder of his wife. In the course of the trial it appeared that the prisoner had frequently forced the deceased into the street at late hours of the night, without regard to her being without clothes, or to the severity of the weather. The surgeon who attended her deposed that a gangrene appeared on her arm, in consequence of its being broken the second time, which was indisputably the cause of her death.

Nearly three months had elapsed from the time of her arm being first broken to that of her decease; but not more than ten days had passed from the second fracture to the consequent mortification. The law expresses that if a person, violently wounded, dies within twelve calendar months, the offender causing such wound, or wounds, shall be deemed guilty of a capital felony. As it was evident that his wife died in consequence of his cruelty within the time limited by law, Joines was pronounced to be guilty of murder, and sentenced to suffer death.

During the confinement of Joines in Newgate he did not appear to entertain a proper sense of his guilt. As his wife did not die immediately after the second fracture of her arm, it was with difficulty he could be persuaded that the jury had done him justice in finding him guilty of murder. He had but a very imperfect notion of the principles of religion; but the Ordinary of the prison took great pains to inspire him with a just sense of his duty towards his Creator. Though he was distressed for all the necessaries of life during the greatest part of his confinement, his daughter-in-law,

who had taken possession of his house and effects, neglected either to visit him, or afford him any kind of assistance; and he was violently enraged against the young woman on account of this behaviour. Joines suffered along with Thomas Barkwith, Dec. 21, 1739.

The fate of this malefactor and his wife affords a striking lesson to teach the necessity of avoiding family dissensions, from which the most terrible effects are frequently known to arise. Mrs. Joines was a woman of violent passions, which, instead of endeavouring to curb, she indulged to the utmost extravagance, though she could not be ignorant that during her paroxysms of rage her life was in momentary danger from her husband, whose natural ferocity of disposition she increased by perpetual ill treatment.

LYDIA ADLER

Convicted of Manslaughter

THIS woman was tried at the Old Bailey, in June, 1744, for the wilful murder of her husband, John Adler, by throwing him on the ground, kicking and stamping on his groin, and giving him thereby a mortal bruise, of which he languished in St. Bartholomew's Hospital from the 11th till the 23d of May, and then died: and she was again indicted on the coroner's inquest for manslaughter.

Hannah Adler, daughter of the deceased, swore that he told her his wife had given him the wounds which afterwards occasioned his death.

Benjamin Barton deposed that the deceased came to him on the 11th of May, with a bloody handkerchief about his head, and asked him for a spare bed, saying, 'This eternal

fiend (meaning his wife) will be the death of me;' but Barton, knowing the woman to be of a very turbulent disposition, refused to lodge the man. After this, he visited him every other day during his illness; and he very often said, 'I wish, Mr. Barton, you would be so good as to get a warrant to secure this woman, for she will be the death of me;' and, two hours before he died, he inquired if such a warrant was procured; and desired that Barton would see her brought to justice, which he promised he would, if it lay in his power.

Hannah Adler, being farther questioned, said that her father died between twelve and one o'clock: that, about two hours and a half before, he said, 'I am a dead man, and this woman (the prisoner) has killed me.' That, after this, he repeatedly declared that his wife was the person that had murdered him, and begged that she might be brought to justice. His last declaration was made only about ten minutes before he died.

Mr. Godman, a surgeon, deposed that the husband died of a mortification, occasioned by a blow; but acknowledged that the deceased had a rupture, and that such a blow as he had received would not have hurt a person in sound health.

The prisoner, in her defence, said that her husband had two wives besides her; and that a quarrel happening between her and one of the others, the husband endeavored to part them, and, in so doing, fell down, and the other woman fell on him; but that she herself never lifted hand or foot against him.

Joseph Steel deposed that the deceased had had four wives; that he was kind to them all at the first, but afterwards used to beat them severely; and that he had seen the prisoner and her husband frequently fight together.

The jury gave a verdict of manslaughter; in consequence of which she was burnt in the hand.

JOHN VICARS
Executed for Murder

THIS malefactor was the son of a farmer at Doddington, in the Isle of Ely, who dying in the infancy of his son, the mother married another husband, who paid no regard to the education of the child.

At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to the Earl of Leicester's gardener, with whom he served his time, and afterwards lived with him as a journeyman; but soon quitted his station, in consequence of an illicit connexion with a married woman, whose husband vowed revenge for the insult.

After this he lived nearly a year with Mr. Bridgman, gardener, at Kensington, and might have continued longer; but, having a propensity to the life of a sailor, he entered on board the Exeter man of war.

This ship being soon paid off, Vicars associated himself with a gang of Sussex smugglers, in consequence of which he was apprehended by a party of dragoons, committed to the new gaol, Southwark, and brought to trial; but had the good fortune to be acquitted.

After this he worked as a gardener at Chelsea, with Mr. Millar, the celebrated botanist; and he likewise worked at other places round the country; but his attachment to women was such, that he was compelled to leave his service more than once.

Having served as a gardener to many gentlemen, he went to his native place, and married; but lived unhappily with his wife, whose ill state of health helped to sour her temper, so that frequent quarrels ensued. Having served as a dragoon during part of the rebellion in 1745, he was discharged, and went home; but his wife died within a year after his return.

He continued a widower about a year, in which time, observing one Mary Hainsworth to keep a great deal of company, he asked her one evening if they were all her sweethearts; she replied, No. He then offered himself, met with great encouragement, and from that time seems to have been refused no favours. But he had no intention of marriage, nor did he promise any such thing. They continued a criminal familiarity for a fortnight, all which time she pressed him to marry her. He told her there was no occasion for her to be in such a hurry; but she replied she was with child; and, if he would not marry her, she would get a warrant and force him. He said he should not care to be forced to do any thing against his will; on which she replied, if he would not marry her she would certainly make away with herself. He then kept away for two or three nights, to see how she would behave.

In the mean time came a hackney-coachman to the town, with whom she seemed to be so very much taken, that a woman who worked in his garden told him he had lost his sweetheart. He said he was glad of that (thinking he had got a good riddance); but he was not so fortunate; for, two or three nights after this, the coachman left the place; on which she flung herself in his way, and he was so simple as to renew their former acquaintance, but not on the score of marriage, which she well knew, and agreed readily to keep him company; but, after two or three nights, she threatened him again with a warrant if he would not marry her. At last his affections growing stronger, on her repeated assurances that she would make him a careful and industrious wife, he unfortunately married her; but not till he had earnestly desired that, if there was any other person for whom she had a greater respect than himself, she would consider of it, as, when once married, it would be too late.

This unhappy woman had learned the glover's business, which she followed, and they lived very lovingly for about two months; but after that time, according to his own state-

ment, words frequently arose between them, occasioned by her adhering to bad advice given her by her mother and others, by some of whom, she owned to him, she was advised to poison him. From words they came to blows, to which she provoked him, though he entreated her to forbear. At length she went away from him to live with her mother; and, notwithstanding the most earnest entreaties, refused to return.

One day, going by her mother's house with some fruit, and seeing his wife there, he offered her some fruit, and forced a kiss from her, desiring to be reconciled. Her mother came in, and, after giving loose to her tongue in a virulent manner, fell to beating him, swearing she would kill him, and advising his wife, who had a knife in her hand, to stab him, which she endeavored to do; but he, feeling something against his belly, ran backwards to the door, and fell upon the threshold, with the old woman upon him; he rolled her off, and getting up, found his thumb cut, a hole in his shirt, and the skin ruffled; then, thinking himself in great danger, he went home. But his mother-in-law and his wife swore the peace against him, and had a warrant to take him up. Upon April 24, therefore, to prevent their serving it, he went to a gentleman's about three miles from Whittlesea, to beg his advice, which was to make a bill of sale of his goods, and go off. He resolved to do so, and came back to Whittlesea about six o'clock the same evening. By the way, on seeing his wife in a new shop which her mother had provided for her, his heart beat with love for her; but on the thoughts of her obstinacy, and that his life or ruin was what they aimed at by laying him in gaol, his resentment got the better of his reason. He stepped into the shop where she was sitting at work, and, placing his left hand under her chin, (he apprehended she thought he was going to kiss her, because she seemed to smile,) and, drawing his knife out of his pocket with the other, he made an attempt to cut her throat, but was prevented by her putting her hands up when she felt the knife. He then placed the point of the knife under her left ear, the back part upward, and stuck it

downward as they stick sheep. She once cried 'Murder!' He said, 'Molly, 'tis now too late, you should have been ruled in time.'

He then ran into the street and called out for somebody to take him prisoner, but every one was afraid: he threatened if they did not he would do more mischief; on which one Thomas Boone taking hold of his arm, he surrendered himself; but appeared as a lunatic till next day, when he was very calm. The above account was signed by himself; and, it being reported that he had committed more murders, he further desired that might be explained as follows:

While he was gardener to R. Man, Esq. the garden was often robbed; on which his master set him to watch one night, armed with a gun and a hanger, and fixed a trap at the supposed place of entrance. The thief came, and soon saw reason to run off; but Vicars cut him in the leg with his hanger; besides which he was so unfortunate as to be taken in the trap, the teeth of which, reaching about the middle of his body, struck into him; so that being carried before a justice, and committed to Maidstone gaol, he soon after died of his wounds; 'but this I apprehend' says he, 'cannot be deemed a murder.'

While in prison he said that he dearly loved his wife; but her provocations were so great that he could not let her live, nor live without her, he having first intended to kill himself also. He persisted in it that he should do the same again on like provocation.

Vicars suffered with Amy Hutchinson at Ely, Nov. 7, 1750. At the place of execution he behaved very penitently, praying with the minister, and singing the VIth Psalm, which he chose, and joined also in Hutchinson's Psalm (LI). He shook hands with several, and bowed to the company, affecting much discourse, and reflecting on several people of Whittlesea by name; in short, the conduct of the man was such, and there was in him such a mixture of penitence and unconcern, that sensible people were at a loss how to pronounce their

opinion about him. He desired to see the woman first dispatched; and accordingly, her face and hands being smeared with tar, and having a garment daubed with pitch, after a short prayer, the executioner strangled her. He went then to Vicars, who, very undauntedly helping him to fix the knot, immediately threw himself off, and expired in a few minutes.

Amy Hutchinson and John Vicars, who thus suffered together—the one for the murder of her husband, the other for destroying his wife—underwent different punishments. It has been already observed that the consuming of the strangled body of a woman for such a crime has been of late years dispensed with; for, though it seldom gave an additional pang, yet it shocked humanity in a ten-fold degree. This part of the sentence of the law was, nevertheless, founded on a well-known part of the Christian system of religion, which says, ‘That wives should be obedient to their husbands in all things.’ Hence the law dealt more severely with a woman, by deeming her crime *petit treason*, next in degree to high treason, which is encompassing the death of the reigning king, who is deemed the common parent of his subjects.

ANNE WHALE & SARAH PLEDGE

Executed for Murder

IN EVERY horrid case which we have hitherto adduced some sordid motive is apparent for the commission of the very worst of murders. But here we can trace none—no hatred to her husband—no lustful appetite to satisfy by criminal means—no third of her husband’s worldly possession prompted her to the wicked deed. We cannot admit that :

woman can have such influence over a woman as to persuade her to murder her husband! especially a sober and affectionate husband.

The wretched woman appears to have been seduced by the serpent with much greater facility than our first mother. She was tempted by an apple; but this degenerate daughter appears to have been actuated by no motive; unless, indeed, to gratify her faithless friend's lurking revenge, in shedding the blood of her innocent husband, can be admitted in extenuation.

Anne Whale was born of respectable parents, at Horsham, in Sussex; but her father dying in her infancy, she was left to the care of her mother.

Early in life she gave evidence of an uncontrollable disposition; and, having a dispute with her mother, she wandered into the country, and associated with people of bad character; but her mother, in order to save her from ruin, at length prevailed on her to return home.

Soon after this she was addressed by a sober young man, named James Whale; and, as a relation had lately left her a legacy of eighty pounds, payable when she was of age, and the mother readily consenting to their alliance, the marriage took place.

They had not been long wedded when they went to reside at a place called Steepwood; but, soon returning to Horsham, they took up their residence in the house of Sarah Pledge, who was distantly related to Mrs. Whale.

A short time after their abode here, a misunderstanding happening between the women, Mr. Whale forbade Mrs. Pledge to come into his apartment: a circumstance that only tended to foment the quarrel.

Soon afterwards, however, the women were privately reconciled; and, as the man was remarkably sober, and they were of opposite characters, it is the less to be wondered at that they sought the means of his destruction.

Mrs. Whale having lain in, and being tolerably recovered,

Mrs. Pledge took the advantage of her husband's absence to come into her room, when she said, 'Nan, let us get rid of this devil!' (meaning Mr. Whale.) The wife said 'How can we do it?' To which the other replied, 'Let us give him a dose of poison.'

The abandoned woman too readily consented to this horrid proposal; and the only difficulty which appeared to arise was how the poison should be procured.

They first attempted their horrid purpose by roasting spiders, and putting them into his beer; but, finding this did not produce the effect, Mrs. Pledge undertook to purchase something more efficacious, and for that purpose went to several market-towns; but, as she went into each apothecary's shop, she either saw, or fancied she saw, some person who knew her, or that her conscience interposed. At length she went to an apothecary at Horsham, to whom she was a stranger; but was still afraid, though she made the purchase.

Hastening to her more wicked friend, she gave her the bane, and Anne, with equal dispatch, administered it; for, at the moment her husband was fondling their child, on whom he doted, she mixed it in some hasty-pudding preparing for his supper. Unsuspicious, the affectionate, but unfortunate man, ate—was soon seized with the racking torments occasioned by the corrosive mineral—and the next day expired! But the neighbours suspecting that his death was occasioned by some sinister arts, a surgeon examined the body, and the coroner's jury, being summoned, brought in a verdict of 'wilful murder.'

Hereupon Mrs. Whale and Mrs. Pledge being taken into custody, and carried before a magistrate, the latter wished to become evidence; but being separately examined, and both confessing the fact, they were committed to Horsham gaol.

On their trials the confessions which they had signed were read; and, some corroborative evidence arising, they were convicted, and received sentence of death.

For some time after conviction Mrs. Pledge behaved in the most hardened manner, making use of profane expressions, and declaring that she would fight with the hangman at the place of execution. On the contrary, Mrs. Whale acknowledged the justice of the sentence which had condemned her, and gave evident signs of her being a real penitent.

On the evening preceding their execution the clergyman who attended them brought Mrs. Pledge into a better state of mind, and then administered the sacrament to both the convicts.

An immense crowd attended at the place of execution, (Horsham, in Sussex,) where Pledge was hanged; and Whale, being tied to a stake, was first strangled, and then burned to ashes, in the twenty-first year of her age, on the 14th of August, 1752.*

ANN WILLIAMS

Executed for the Murder of Her Husband

THE behaviour of this fiend had long been a prelude to the diabolical crime which she committed. She was in her family turbulent and dictatorial; her husband the very reverse. His mild and quiet disposition served only to nurse her opposition and violence. He had long given way to her in all things, and she, in return, ruled him with a rod of iron.

* We find another shocking instance of revenging injuries done by one person on the body of another in the case of Rachel Beauchamp. This wretch having quarrelled with another woman, her neighbour, and not being able to obtain of her the satisfaction she thirsted for, inveigled from home the child of her antagonist, a beautiful little girl, of four years of age, and cut its throat! For this unprovoked murder she was hanged at Tyburn, the 13th day of January, 1752.

Before the commission of this horrid deed we have found women make use of man's unqualified indulgence. Hence arose the vulgar saying of 'the grey mare being the better horse,' of 'hen-pecked husbands,' and many other irritating observations on men troubled with shrews.

One of the wisest of the ancient philosophers had his Xantippe: and the poet sings,

When man to woman gives the sway,
To what is right they oft say Nay.

The pliancy of the more unfortunate man in question could not shield him from the consequence of the ascendancy she had over him; it sunk into contempt, and she determined to rule alone. To effect this, her wicked heart suggested the death of her husband. For this horrid purpose she prevailed on their servant-man to purchase some white mercury, which she mixed in some gruel, and caused him to eat it. This mode of administering the poison, it was conjectured, was adopted in contempt of him; for it appeared the poor man did not like gruel. She then directed him to draw her some ale, of which he also drank; and was immediately seized with violent purgings and vomiting. She told the man, whom it seems she meant afterwards to share her bed, that she 'had given her husband the stuff he brought, and that it was operating purely.'

The dying man, in his agonies, said his wife was a wicked woman; that he was well until she made him eat some pap, which had done his business, and that he should be a dead man on the morrow; and, in spite of medical aid, he died next day, his body being in a state of mortification.

The horrid crime being fully proved against her, she received sentence to be burnt at the stake, which sentence was accordingly carried into execution at Gloucester, April 13, 1753, among a number of spectators, who showed little pity for her fate, and which became still more shocking from denying the fact, so incontrovertibly proved, to the very last moment of her existence.

NICHOL BROWN

Executed for the Murder of His Wife

IN THE account given of this man there is a savage ferocity which has not before come under our notice; for, though we read in Captain Cook's, and other accounts of circumnavigators, of their meeting with cannibals; and, further, that even civilized men, by the dire dint of the excruciating pains of hunger, have slain, and, with horrible compunction, eaten one of their companions, to support life in the rest; yet where shall we find, except in this instance, a savage, in the land of civilization and of plenty, eat human flesh? After this it no longer remains astonishingly horrible that such a brute could force his wife into the fire, and burn her to death.

This atrocious monster was a native of Cramond, a small town near Edinburgh, where he received a school education. At a proper age he was placed with a butcher in that city, and, when his apprenticeship was expired, went to sea in a man of war, and continued in that station four years. The ship being paid off, Brown returned to Edinburgh, and married the widow of a butcher, who had left her a decent fortune.

Soon after this marriage Brown commenced dealer in cattle, in which he met with such success, that, in the course of a few years, he became possessed of a considerable sum. His success, however, did not inspire him with sentiments of humanity. His temper was so bad, that he was shunned by all serious people of his acquaintance; for he delighted in fomenting quarrels among his neighbours.

Taking to a habit of drinking, he seldom came home sober at night; and, his wife following his example, he used frequently to beat her for copying his own crime. This conduct rendered both parties obnoxious to their acquaintance; and

the following story of Brown, which may be relied on as a fact, will incontestably prove the unfeeling brutality of his nature.

About a week after the execution of Norman Ross, already mentioned for murder, Brown had been drinking with some company at Leith, till, in the height of their jollity, they boasted what extravagant actions they could perform. Brown swore that he would cut off a piece of flesh from the leg of the dead man, and eat it. His companions, drunk as they were, appeared shocked at the very idea; while Brown, to prove that he was in earnest, procured a ladder, which he carried to the gibbet, and, cutting off a piece of flesh from the leg of the suspended body of Ross, brought it back, broiled, and ate it.

This circumstance was much talked of, but little credit was given to it by the inhabitants of Edinburgh till Brown's companions gave the fullest testimony of its truth. It will be now proper that we recite the particulars of the shocking crime for which this offender forfeited his life.

After having been drinking at an alehouse in the Cannon-gate, he went home about eleven at night, in a high degree of intoxication. His wife was also much in liquor; but, though equally criminal himself, he was so exasperated against her, that he struck her so violently that she fell from her chair. The noise of her fall alarmed the neighbours; but, as frequent quarrels had happened between them, no immediate notice was taken of the affair.

In about fifteen minutes the wife was heard to cry out 'Murder! help! fire! the rogue is murdering me! help, for Christ's sake!' The neighbours, now apprehending real danger, knocked at the door; but, no person being in the house but Brown and his wife, no admission was granted; and the woman was heard to groan most shockingly.

A person, looking through the key-hole, saw Brown holding his wife to the fire; on which he was called on to open the door, but refused to do so. The candle being extin-

guished, and the woman still continuing her cries, the door was at length forced open; and, when the neighbours went in, they beheld her a most shocking spectacle, lying half-naked before the fire, and her flesh in part broiled. In the interim Brown had got into bed, pretended to be asleep, and, when spoken to, appeared ignorant of the transaction. The woman, though so dreadfully burnt, retained her senses, accused her husband of the murder, and told in what manner it was perpetrated. She survived till the following morning, still continuing in the same tale, and then expired in the utmost agony.

The murderer was now seized, and, being lodged in the gaol of Edinburgh, was brought to trial, and capitally convicted.

After sentence he was allowed six weeks to prepare himself for a future state, agreeably to the custom in Scotland.

He was visited by several divines of Edinburgh, but steadily persisted in the denial of his guilt, affirming that he was ignorant of his wife being burnt till the door was broke open by the neighbours.

Among others who visited the criminal was the Reverend Mr. Kinloch, an ancient minister, who, urging him to confess his crime, received no other reply than that, 'if he was to die to-morrow, he would have a new suit of clothes, to appear decently at the gallows.' Mr. Kinloch was so affected by his declaration, that he shed tears over the unhappy convict.

On the following day, August the 14th, 1754, he was attended to the place of execution at Edinburgh by the Reverend Dr. Brown; but to the last he denied having been guilty of the crime for which he suffered.

After execution he was hung in chains; but the body was stolen from the gibbet, and thrown into a pond, where, being found, it was exposed as before. In a few days, however, it was again stolen; and, though a reward was offered for its discovery, no such discovery was made.

It is impossible to express sufficient horror at the crime of

which this man was guilty; and it is therefore the less necessary to make any remarks on his case, as no one can be tempted to think of committing a similar crime till he is totally divested of all the feelings of humanity. From a fate so wretched as this may the God of infinite mercy deliver us!

ANN BEDDINGFIELD & RICHARD RINGE

*The Former Burnt for the Murder of Her Husband,
and the Latter Hanged for Being Her Accomplice*

JOHN BEDDINGFIELD, the murdered husband, was the son of respectable parents at Sternfield, in Suffolk; and, having married when he was about twenty-four years of age, the young couple were placed in a good farm, which was carefully attended by Beddingfield, who bore the character of a man of industry and integrity. They had two children, and lived in apparent happiness till near the time when the shocking event happened which gives rise to this melancholy tale.

Richard Ringe, a youth of nineteen, was engaged in the service of Mr. Beddingfield; nor had he been long in the house before his mistress became so enamoured of him that her husband was the object of her contempt. Her behaviour to Ringe was such that he could not long doubt of her favorable inclinations; nor had he virtue to resist the temptation; and they were so incautious in their proceedings that four of the servants were occasional witnesses of their criminal intercourse.

At length Mrs. Beddingfield, having formed the horrid design of destroying her husband, communicated her intention

to Ringe, who hesitated on the dreadful proposal, nor consented till she promised that he should share her fortune as the reward of the deed.

Mrs. Beddingfield, blinded by her passion, was now so much off her guard as to say very indiscreet things to her servants, which might lead them to presume that she had determined on the most deliberate wickedness, of which the following is given as one instance:—As she was dressing herself one morning she said to her maid-servant, ‘Help me to put on my ear-rings; but I shall not wear them much longer, for I shall have new black ones. It will not be long before somebody in the house dies, and I believe it will be your master.’

Extravagant as this declaration was, the behaviour of Ringe was not at all more prudent. He purchased some poison, and told one of the servant-maids that he would be her constant friend if she would mix it with some rum and milk that her master was to drink in the morning; but the girl declined having any concern in so horrid a transaction; nor did she take any notice of the proposal that had been made till after the commission of the murder.

Mr. Beddingfield happening to be indisposed, it was recommended to him to take a vomit; but the water which the servant-maid brought him to drink proving too hot, Ringe was directed to bring some cold water to mix with it; and he took this opportunity of putting arsenic into the water; but Beddingfield, observing a white sediment in the basin, would not drink, though no suspicion of the liquor being poisoned had occurred to him. From this time the intentional murderers resolved not to think of having recourse to poison, but devised another scheme of dispatching the unfortunate object of their vengeance.

Mr. Beddingfield having been selling some cattle to another farmer, they had drank a social glass together, but not to such a degree as to occasion intoxication.

When Mr. Beddingfield came home he found that his wife

was in bed with one of the maid-servants; on which he desired her to come to his chamber; but this she refused, it having been determined by Ringe to commit murder on that night, while his master was asleep; and, when he knew he was in bed, he quitted his own room, passed through that in which his mistress slept, and went to the bed-chamber of his master.

Ringe, observing that Mr. Beddingfield was asleep, threw a cord round his neck to strangle him; but, being hurt by the weight of Ringe lying across him, he struggled so that they both fell off the bed together. However, the horrid deed of murder was soon perpetrated.

Mrs. Beddingfield, being asleep in the next room, was awakened by the noise, and in her fright awakened the servant. At this instant Ringe entered the room, and said 'I have done for him;' to which the wife answered, 'Then I am easy.' The girl was greatly alarmed, and cried out 'Master!' supposing Mr. Beddingfield was present, for there was no light in the room; but Mrs. Beddingfield commanded her to be silent.

Ringe asked the mistress if any one was acquainted with what had passed besides herself and the maid; on which the girl asked, 'How came you here, Richard?' The villain, terrified by his guilt, replied 'I was forced to it.' He now went to his own room, and laid down; and the mistress and maid getting up, the latter was charged not to utter a syllable of what had passed.

Mrs. Beddingfield now directed the girl to call Ringe, who seemed offended at being disturbed; but, when he had struck a light, his mistress told him to go into his master's room, for she was afraid that he was indisposed. Ringe obeyed; but, on his return, said, with an air of surprise, that his master was dead.

By this time another maid-servant was got up, and the girls, going to their master's room, found the deceased lying

on his face, and observed that part of his shirt collar was torn off, and that his neck was black and swelled.

A messenger was instantly dispatched to Mr. Beddingfield's parents, who proposed to send for a surgeon; but the wife insisted that it was unnecessary to call in medical aid, as her husband was already dead.

On the following day the coroner's jury took an inquisition into the cause of his death; but so superficial was the inquiry, that it lasted only a few minutes, and their determination was that he died a natural death.

The guilty commerce between the murderers now became still more evident than before; but so fickle was Mrs. Beddingfield's disposition, that in a few weeks she began to despise the man whom she had excited to the murder of her husband.

The servant-maid now resolved to divulge the fact, but postponed doing so till she had received the wages for her quarter's service. When her mistress had paid her she went to her parents, and discovered all she knew of the matter; on which a warrant was issued for apprehending the murderers.

They had an item of what was going forward, and therefore attempted to bribe the girl's mother to secrecy: but she rejected their offers; on which Mrs. Beddingfield made her escape, but was apprehended at the end of two days.

Ringe, however, seemed to disdain consulting his own safety, but remained in the house; and after he was committed to prison he confessed that he had deemed himself a dead man from the time of his perpetrating the murder.

At the Lent assizes in 1763 the prisoners were brought to trial, when the surgeon and coroner were examined as to what fell within their knowledge. The former confessed that he saw marks of violence on the body; and, being asked how he could depose before the coroner that Mr. Beddingfield had died a natural death, he replied that he did not think

much about it;—a strange and almost unaccountable declaration!

The preceding part of this narrative will lead the reader to judge of the rest of the evidence that was given on the trial; and the prisoners, having nothing to allege in extenuation of their crime, were capitally convicted, and sentenced to die.

After conviction, as well as before, Ringe freely confessed his guilt; but expressed the utmost anxiety at the thought of being dissected. Mrs. Beddingfield refused to make any confession till the day before her death.

They were placed on one sledge, the morning of April the 18th, 1763, and conveyed to the place of execution, near Ipswich, called Rushmore, where Ringe made a pathetic address to the surrounding multitude, advising young people to be warned by his fate, to avoid the delusions of wicked women, and to consider chastity as a virtue.

The woman persisted in declaring her innocence, until, finding Ringe had made a full confession, she expressed strong resentment against him: but, when tied to the stake, she acknowledged herself guilty, and declared that she deserved to die for being privy to the murder of her husband, and for having had criminal intercourse with Ringe for three months before it happened.

From the fate of this woman girls should be taught never to think of giving their hands in marriage to a man if they are not certain of his having full possession of their hearts; and if, after marriage, circumstances of a painful nature should arise, they should patiently recollect that they have drawn an inevitable lot, and endeavour, by a kind and obliging behaviour, to conciliate the husbands' affection; but by no means to think of violating the laws of chastity, without a proper observance of which, jealousy, and all its horrid train of consequences, must ensue; and marriage, otherwise the happiest state in life, be rendered the most miserable.

From the ignominious death of Ringe young men should

learn not to listen to the seducing tongue of female beauty; but, having lived a life of virtue till they can obtain each some worthy woman in marriage, do justice to the preference by which they may be distinguished.

JOHN HANNAH

Executed for the Murder of His Wife

THIS case exhibits so much brutal insensibility, that we shall give it in the words of the witnesses on whose testimony he was convicted. He was indicted at the general sessions for Yarmouth, September the 3d, 1813, for the wilful murder of his wife. His age was sixty-seven years.

On the trial, Elizabeth Betts deposed that she rented a room directly over the one in which the prisoner lived; that on the morning of the 15th of April she was alarmed about three o'clock with a dreadful cry of murder; she went down stairs and called out, 'You old rogue, you are murdering your wife;'—she heard Elizabeth Hannah say, 'For God's sake come in, for my husband is murdering me!' but witness, knowing the violence of the prisoner's temper, was afraid, and said she dare not go in, but went up stairs to dress herself, with a view of procuring assistance; she went out and told a neighbour, of the name of Thomson, that Hannah and his wife were quarrelling, and was going to the watch-house to procure some assistance; she, however, did not succeed, the watch being off duty; on her return her children were crying and out of bed, which obliged her to remain with them; she called frequently to the prisoner to come out of his room, or he would be the death of his wife; she heard the cries of the deceased about a quarter of an hour after her return from the watch-house; she distinctly heard three heavy groans, after which all was silent, and she went to bed;

she got up about six o'clock, and did not leave the door of the prisoner till it was opened by the constable.

James Storey, a constable, deposed that he broke open the door of the house, and entered the room with several neighbours, when he saw Elizabeth Hannah lying on the bed, dead, with her arms by her side, as if laid out, and the bed-clothes covered smoothly over her; the bed-clothes were removed, and he saw the deceased had apparently a bruise on the front of her neck, he saw the prisoner sitting near the bed-side, smoking a pipe, and looking at the bed. He said to him, 'Why, John, surely you have murdered your wife:' to which he replied, 'She was always quarrelling with me.' Witness said there were other means of getting rid of her than killing her. The prisoner made no reply.

The prisoner made no defence, and the jury brought in their verdict, Guilty. The trial lasted five hours, during which the prisoner, who was represented of a most ungovernable temper, remained entirely unmoved. He behaved likewise with the same brutal insensibility at the place of execution on Monday, September 6th, 1813. On ascending the gallows he confessed 'That he was the murderer of his wife, by strangling her with his hands, and not with a rope, as had been stated; he said they had lived a very uncomfortable life for many years past, owing to his wife giving her company to other men, which was the cause of his committing the murder.' The instant before being turned off, he particularly requested to see his daughter, when he was informed it was not possible, as she was confined in Bedlam; he also desired the gaoler to look under the step of the cell, and he would there find four shillings and six-pence. He had disposed by will of some little property, the joint savings of himself and his wife. A signal was then given, and the unfeeling man was immediately launched into eternity. The body, after hanging the usual time, was delivered to the surgeons for dissection. The gaoler; on his return, found the money, as described, in the cell.

Lessons in Love

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*From the NEWGATE CALENDAR*

MARY BLANDY

*Executed for the Murder of Her Father*

IT HAD been a melancholy remark that two young ladies—Miss Jefferies and Miss Blandy—well educated, and of considerable expectations from the parents whom they murdered, should, as it were, at the same moment contemplate the death of their protectors.

Yet, though Miss Blandy's crime was committed on blood nearest in consanguinity, she does not appear to have been that determined murderess we find in Miss Jefferies.

Public conversation was long divided on their fate, and in comparisons of their different degrees of crimes.

There is too much reason to fear that both had been seduced by villainous men: but Miss Jefferies, as will be seen, was a premeditated and determined murderess. Over the fate of the wretched Miss Blandy we may indulge somewhat of commiseration; for the profligate wretch who seduced her was a disgrace to the noble blood from which he derived existence; and what renders his crime more heinous was his being a married man.

It will appear that, had not this corrupt twig of the noble branch of the tree of genealogy from which he grew spread his insidious snares to entangle the heart and corrupt the mind of Miss Blandy, she would not have been guilty of the abominable and unnatural crime of parricide.

In a moral point of view, though the law may not immediately overtake the villainy, we would appeal to the hearts

of the readers of our own sex—nay, we would ask the question, in cooler moments of youth—‘Can there be a more destructive vice than the seduction of a virtuous female, under promise of marriage?’ Will not your inflamed passions cool? and then what must be the stings of conscience when you find the too-willing sacrifice to your lust a wretched creature, neglected by her friends, the scorn of the virtuous part of her sex, and the prey of your own?

Thus are we led to acknowledge, with sorrow, the lines of the poet, on a seduced woman:—

Man, the lawless libertine, may rove,  
Free and unquestion'd, thro' the paths of love:  
But woman, sense and nature's easy fool—  
If poor weak woman swerve from virtue's rule—  
If, strongly charm'd, she tempt the flow'ry way,  
And in the softer paths of pleasure stray—  
Ruin ensues, remorse, and endless shame,  
And one false step entirely damns her fame:  
In vain with tears the loss she may deplore,  
In vain look back to what she was before:  
She sets, like stars that fall, to rise no more.

Mary Blandy was the only daughter of a Mr. Francis Blandy, an eminent attorney at Henley-upon-Thames, and town-clerk of that place. She had been educated with the utmost tenderness; and every possible care was taken to impress her mind with sentiments of virtue and religion. Her person had nothing in it remarkably engaging, but she was of a sprightly and affable disposition, of polite manners, engaging in conversation, and was much distinguished by her good sense.

She had read the best authors in the English language, and had a memory remarkably retentive of the knowledge she had acquired. In a word, she excelled most of her sex in those accomplishments which are calculated to grace and dignify the female mind.

The father being reputed to be rich, a number of young gentlemen courted his acquaintance, with a view to make an



interest with his daughter: but, of all the visitors, none were more agreeable, both to father and daughter, than the gentlemen of the army; and the former was never better pleased than when he had some of them at his table.

Miss Blandy was about twenty-six years of age when she became acquainted with Captain William Henry Cranstoun, who was then about forty-six. He was the son of Lord Cranstoun, of an ancient Scotch family, which had made great alliances, by intermarriages, with the nobility of Scotland. Being a younger brother, his uncle, Lord Mark Ker, procured him a commission in the army, which, with the interest of fifteen hundred pounds, was all he had for his support.

Cranstoun married a Miss Murray in Scotland, in the year 1745, and received a handsome fortune with her; but he was defective in the great article of prudence. His wife was delivered of a son within a year after the marriage. About this period he received orders to join his regiment in England, and was afterwards sent on a recruiting party to Henley, which gave rise to the unhappy connexion which ended so fatally.

It may seem extraordinary, and is, perhaps, a proof of Cranstoun's art, that he could ingratiate himself into the affections of Miss Blandy; for his person was diminutive, he was so marked with the small pox that his face was in seams, and he squinted very much: but he possessed that faculty of small-talk which is unfortunately too much esteemed by many of the fair sex.

Mr. Blandy, who was acquainted with Lord Mark Ker, was fond of being deemed a man of taste, and so open to flattery, that it is not to be wondered at that a man of Cranstoun's artifice ingratiated himself into his favour, and obtained permission to pay his addresses to the daughter.

Cranstoun, apprehending that Miss Blandy might discover that he had a wife in Scotland, informed her that he was involved in a disagreeable lawsuit in that country with a young lady, who claimed him as a husband; and so sure

was he of the interest he had obtained in Miss Blandy's affections, that he had the confidence to ask her if she loved him well enough to wait the issue of the affair. She told him that, if her father and mother approved of her staying for him, she had no objection.

This must be allowed to have been a very extraordinary declaration of love, and as extraordinary a reply.

Cranstoun endeavoured to conduct the amour with all possible secrecy; notwithstanding which it came to the knowledge of Lord Mark Ker, who wrote to Mr. Blandy, informing him that the captain had a wife and children in Scotland, and conjuring him to preserve his daughter from ruin.

Alarmed by this intelligence, Mr. Blandy informed his daughter of it; but she did not seem equally affected, as Cranstoun's former declaration had prepared her to expect some such news; and, when the old gentleman taxed Cranstoun with it, he declared it was only an affair of gallantry, of which he should have no difficulty to free himself.

Mrs. Blandy appears to have been under as great a degree of infatuation as her daughter, for she forbore all farther inquiry, on the captain's bare assurance that the report of his marriage was false. Cranstoun, however, could not be equally easy. He saw the necessity of devising some scheme to get his first marriage annulled, or of bidding adieu to all the gratifications he could promise himself by a second.

After revolving various schemes in his mind, he at length wrote to his wife, requesting her to disown him for a husband. The substance of this letter was, that, having no other way of rising to preferment but in the army, he had but little ground to expect advancement there, while it was known he was encumbered with a wife and family; but, could he once pass for a single man, he had not the least doubt of being quickly preferred, which would procure him a sufficiency to maintain her, as well as himself, in a genteeler

manner than now he was able to do. All, therefore, (adds he) I have to request of you is, that you will transcribe the enclosed copy of a letter, wherein you disown me for a husband; put your maiden name to it, and send it by the post: all the use I shall make of it shall be to procure my advancement, which will necessarily include your own benefit. In full assurance that you will comply with my request, I remain, your most affectionate husband, W. H. Cranstoun.'

Mrs. Cranstoun, ill as she had been, treated by her husband, and little hope as she had of more generous usage, was, after repeated letters had passed, induced to give up her claim, and at length sent him the requested paper, signed Murray, which was her maiden name.

The villainous captain, being possessed of this letter, made some copies of it, which he sent to his wife's relations, and his own: the consequence of which were that they withdrew the assistance they had afforded the lady, which reduced her to an extremity she had never before known.

Exclusive of this, he instituted a suit before the lords of session, for the dissolution of the marriage; but when Mrs. Cranstoun was heard, and the letters read, the artful contrivance was seen through, the marriage was confirmed, and Cranstoun was adjudged to pay the expenses of the trial.

At the next sessions Captain Cranstoun preferred a petition, desiring to be heard by counsel on new evidence, which it was pretended had arisen respecting Miss Murray. This petition, after some hesitation, was heard; but the issue was, that the marriage was again confirmed, and Cranstoun was obliged to allow his wife a separate maintenance.

Still, however, he paid his addresses to Miss Blandy with the same fervency as before; which coming to the knowledge of Mrs. Cranstoun, she sent her the decree of the Court of Session, establishing the validity of the marriage.

It is reasonable to suppose that this would have convinced Miss Blandy of the erroneous path in which she was tread-

ing. On this occasion she consulted her mother: and, Cranstoun having set out for Scotland, the old lady advised her to write to him, to know the truth of the affair.

Absurd as this advice was, she wrote to him; but, soon after the receipt of her letter, he returned to Henley, when he had impudence enough to assert that the cause was not finally determined, but would be referred to the House of Lords.

Mr. Blandy gave very little credit to this assertion; but his wife assented at once to all Cranstoun said, and treated him with as much tenderness as if he had been her own child; of which the following circumstance will afford ample proof.

Mrs. Blandy and her daughter being on a visit to Mrs. Pocock, of Turville Court, the old lady was taken so ill as to be obliged to continue there for some days. In the height of her disorder, which was a violent fever, she cried, 'let Cranstoun be sent for.' He was then with the regiment at Southampton; but, her request being complied with, she no sooner saw him than she raised herself on the pillow, and hung round his neck, repeatedly exclaiming 'My dear Cranstoun, I am glad you are come; I shall now grow well soon!' So extravagant was her fondness, that she insisted on having him as her nurse; and he actually administered her medicines.

On the following day she grew better; on which she said 'This I owe to you, my dear Cranstoun; your coming has given me new health and fresh spirits. I was fearful I should die, and you not here to comfort that poor girl. How like death she looks!'

It would be ungenerous to the memory of Mrs. Blandy to suppose that she saw Cranstoun's guilt in its true light of enormity; but certainly she was a most egregious dupe to his artifices.

Mrs. Blandy and her daughter having come to London, the former wanted forty pounds, to discharge a debt she had contracted unknown to her husband; and Cranstoun coming into the room while the mother and the daughter were weep-

ing over their distresses, he demanded the reason of their grief; of which being informed, he left them, and, soon returning with the requisite sum, he threw it into the old lady's lap. Charmed by this apparent generosity, she burst into tears, and squeezed his hand fervently; on which he embraced her, and said, 'Remember it is a son; therefore do not make yourself uneasy: you do not lie under any obligation to me.'

Of this debt of forty pounds, ten pounds had been contracted by the ladies while in London, for expenses in consequence of their pleasures; and the other thirty by expensive treats given to Cranstoun at Henley, during Mr. Blandy's absence.

Soon after this Mrs. Blandy died; and Cranstoun now complaining of his fear of being arrested for the forty pounds, the young lady borrowed that sum, which she gave him, and made him a present of her watch: so that he was a gainer by his former apparent generosity.

Mr. Blandy began now to show evident dislike of Captain Cranstoun's visits: but he found means to take leave of the daughter, to whom he complained of the father's ill treatment; but insinuated that he had a method of conciliating his esteem; and that when he arrived in Scotland he would send her some powders proper for the purpose; on which, to prevent suspicion, he would write, 'Powders to clean the Scotch pebbles.'

It does not appear that the young lady had any idea that the powders he was to send her were of a poisonous nature. She seems rather to have been infatuated by her love; and this is the only excuse that can be made for her subsequent conduct, which appears otherwise totally inconsistent with that good sense for which she was celebrated.

Cranstoun sent her the powders, according to promise; and Mr. Blandy being indisposed on the Sunday se'nnight before his death, Susan Gunnell, a maid-servant, made him some water-gruel, into which Miss Blandy conveyed some

of the powder, and gave it to her father; and, repeating this draught on the following day, he was tormented with the most violent pains in his bowels.

When the old gentleman's disorder increased, and he was attended by a physician, his daughter came into the room, and, falling on her knees to her father, said, 'Banish me where you please; do with me what you please, so you do but forgive me; and, as for Cranstoun, I will never see him, speak to him, or write to him, as long as I live, if you will forgive me.'

In reply to this the father said, 'I forgive thee, my dear, and I hope God will forgive thee; but thou shouldst have considered before thou attemptedst any thing against thy father; thou shouldst have considered I was thy own father.'

Miss Blandy now acknowledged that she had put powder in his gruel, but that it was for an innocent purpose; on which the father, turning in his bed, said, 'O such a villain! to come to my house, eat of the best and drink of the best my house could afford; and, in return, take away my life, and ruin my daughter. O! my dear, thou must hate that man.'

The young lady replied, 'Sir, every word you say is like a sword piercing to my heart; more severe than if you were angry: I must kneel, and beg you will not curse me.' The father said, 'I curse thee, my dear! how couldst thou think I would curse thee? No, I bless thee, and hope God will bless thee, and amend thy life. Do, my dear, go out of the room; say no more, lest thou shouldst say any thing to thy own prejudice. Go to thy uncle Stephens; and take him for thy friend: poor man! I am sorry for him.'

Mr. Blandy dying in consequence of his illness, it was suspected that the daughter had occasioned his death; whereupon she was taken into custody, and committed to the gaol at Oxford.

She was tried on the 3d of March, 1752; and, after many witnesses had been called to give evidence of her guilt, she

was desired to make her defence, which she did in the following speech:—

‘My Lord,—It is morally impossible for me to lay down the hardships I have received.—I have been aspersed in my character. In the first place it has been said I spoke ill of my father; that I have cursed him, and wished him at hell; which is extremely false. Sometimes little family affairs have happened, and he did not speak to me so kindly as I could wish. I own I am passionate, my lord; and in those passions some hasty expressions might have dropped; but great care has been taken to recollect every word I have spoken at different times, and to apply them to such particular purposes as my enemies knew would do me the greatest injury. These are hardships, my lord, such as yourself must allow to be so. It was said too, my lord, that I endeavored to make my escape. Your lordship will judge from the difficulties I labored under:—I had lost my father;—I was accused of being his murderer;—I was not permitted to go near him;—I was forsaken by my friends—affronted by the mob—and insulted by my servants.—Although I begged to have the liberty to listen at the door where he died, I was not allowed it. My keys were taken from me; my shoe-buckles and garters too—to prevent me from making away with myself, as though I was the most abandoned creature. What could I do, my lord? I verily believe I must have been out of my senses. When I heard my father was dead, I ran out of the house, and over the bridge, and had nothing on but a half sack and petticoats, without a hoop—my petticoats hanging about me. The mob gathered round me. Was this a condition, my lord, to make my escape in? A good woman beyond the bridge, seeing me in this distress, desired me to walk in till the mob was dispersed: the town-sergeant was there. I begged he would take me under his protection, to have me home: the woman said it was not proper, the mob was very great, and that I had better stay a little. When I came home

they said I used the constable ill. I was locked up for fifteen hours, with only an old servant of the family to attend me. I was not allowed a maid for the common decencies of my sex. I was sent to gaol, and was in hopes there at least this usage would have ended; but was told it was reported I was frequently drunk; that I attempted to make my escape; that I did not attend at chapel. A more abstemious woman, my lord, I believe, does not live.

‘Upon the report of my making my escape, the gentleman who was high-sheriff last year (not the present) came and told me, by order of the higher power, he must put an iron on me. I submitted as I always do, to the higher powers. Some time after he came again, and said he must put a heavier one upon me; which I have worn, my lord, till I came hither. I asked the sheriff why I was so ironed. He said he did it by the command of some noble peer, on his hearing that I intended making my escape. I told him I never had any such thought, and I would bear it with the other cruel usage I had received on my character. The Reverend Mr. Swinton, the worthy clergyman who attended me in prison, can testify I was regular at the chapel whenever I was well: sometimes I really was not able to come out, and then he attended me in my room. They have likewise published papers and depositions, which ought not to have been published, in order to represent me as the most abandoned of my sex, and to prejudice the world against me. I submit myself to your lordship, and to the worthy jury. I do assure your lordship, as I am to answer at the great tribunal where I must appear, I am as innocent as the child unborn of the death of my father. I would not endeavour to save my life at the expense of truth: I really thought the powder an innocent inoffensive thing; and I gave it to procure his love (meaning towards Cranstoun). It has been mentioned, I should say, I was ruined. My lord, when a young woman loses her character, is not there her ruin? Why, then, should this expression be construed in so wide a sense? Is it not ruining my



character to have such a thing laid to my charge? And, whatever may be the event of this trial, I am ruined most effectually.'

The trial lasted eleven hours, and then the judge summed up the evidence, mentioning the scandalous behaviour of some people respecting the prisoner, in printing and publishing what they called depositions taken before the coroner relating to the affair before them: to which he added, 'I hope you have not seen them; but, if you have, I must tell you, as you are men of sense and probity, that you must divest yourselves of every prejudice that can arise from thence, and attend merely to the evidence that has now been given.'

The judge then summed up the evidence with the utmost candour; and the jury, having considered the affair, found her guilty without going out of court.

After conviction she behaved with the utmost decency and resignation. She was attended by the Reverend Mr. Swinton, from whose hands she received the sacrament on the day before her execution, declaring that she did not know there was any thing hurtful in the powders she had given her father.

The night before her death she spent in devotion; and at nine in the morning of the 6th of April, 1752, she left her apartment, being dressed in a black bombasin, and having her arms bound with black ribands.

The clergyman attended her to the place of execution, to which she walked with the utmost solemnity of deportment; and, when there, acknowledged her fault in administering the powders to her father; but declared that, as she must soon appear before the most awful tribunal, she had no idea of doing injury, nor any suspicions that the powders were of a poisonous nature.

Having ascended some steps of the ladder, she said 'Gentlemen, don't hang me high, for the sake of decency.' Being desired to go something higher, she turned about, and expressed her apprehensions that she should fall. The rope be-

ing put round her neck, she pulled her handkerchief over her face, and was turned off on holding out a book of devotions which she had been reading.

The crowd of spectators assembled on this occasion was immense; and when she had hung the usual time she was cut down, and the body, being put into a hearse, was conveyed to Henley, at one o'clock on the following morning.

It will now be proper to return to Cranstoun, who was the original contriver of this horrid murder. Having heard of Miss Blandy's commitment to Oxford gaol, he concealed himself some time in Scotland, and then escaped to Boulogne, in France. Meeting there with Mrs. Ross, who was distantly related to his family, he acquainted her with his situation, and begged her protection; on which she advised him to change his name for her maiden name of Dunbar.

Some officers in the French service, who were related to his wife, hearing of his concealment, vowed revenge, if they should meet with him, for his cruelty to the unhappy woman: on which he fled to Paris, from whence he went to Furnes, a town in Flanders, where Mrs. Ross had provided a lodging for his reception.

He had not been long at Furnes when he was seized with a severe fit of illness, which brought him to a degree of reflection to which he had been long a stranger. At length he sent for a father belonging to an adjacent convent, and received absolution from his hands, on declaring himself a convert to the Romish faith.

Cranstoun died on the 30th of November, 1752; and the fraternity of monks and friars looked on his conversion as an object of such importance, that solemn mass was sung on the occasion, and the body was followed to the grave not only by the ecclesiastics, but by the magistrates of the town.

His papers were then sent to Scotland, to his brother, Lord Cranstoun; his clothes were sold for the discharge of his debts; and his wife came into possession of the interest of the fifteen hundred pounds above mentioned.

## WILLIAM TAUNTON

*Executed for the Murder of Mrs. Phipps*

THIS malefactor was a native of Gloucestershire, and brought up as a husbandman, which employment he quitted to live as ostler at an inn at Tewkesbury, in which capacity he continued several years, and then came to London.

After this he was engaged in the service of Mrs. Phipps, a widow, who kept the Lamb Inn at Colnbrook. Though she was the mother of several children, yet a scandalous intimacy soon ensued between her and Taunton, and they lived together some years as husband and wife; and strangers calling at the inn presumed that he was the landlord, from the airs of authority which he assumed.

Miserable, however, was this connexion in its progress, and fatal to both parties in its event. Continual quarrels arose between them, and frequent blows were the consequence of their reiterated disputes; and their way of life, as might be reasonably imagined, greatly injured the character of Mrs. Phipps, and occasioned the loss of great part of her business.

After a residence of some time, their situation becoming unhappy, Taunton went down to his friends in Gloucestershire, with an intention, as it was thought, to have remained there; but he had not been long in the country when he received a letter from Mrs. Phipps, earnestly inviting his return, alleging, as a reason for it, that she was unhappy without his company.

The ill-fated man was weak enough to return on this invitation; but the connexion had not been long renewed before their quarrels became as frequent as before, and proceeded even to a greater degree of violence, till the neighbours were

alarmed at their inconsistent conduct, and what began in illicit love ended in murder.

After repeated disagreements, they sat down to supper one evening in apparent reconciliation; when Mrs. Phipps asked Mr. Taunton if she should pare him a cucumber, or would he eat it with the rind on. These words were scarcely pronounced when Taunton seized the kitchen poker, and told her to lay hold of one end of it. She wondered at this command, and asked him why it must be complied with. He still insisted on her taking hold of one end of it: on which she said 'If I must have it, let me have the clean end; but what am I to do with it?'—His answer was 'You must knock out my brains.' She replied 'No, Taunton, I will not hurt a hair of your head.' To this he said 'If you will not knock my brains out, I will knock your brains out;' and no sooner had he uttered this horrid expression than he struck her on the head with such force as almost to lay her skull bare; after which he gave her a blow on the face, which cut her in the most terrible manner.

A surgeon, being sent for, dressed her wounds, and, addressing himself to Taunton, told him that, if he had murdered her, he would certainly have been hanged. The offender acknowledged that he knew that must have been the consequence; but desired the surgeon to take all proper care of the wounded woman.

The injury took place on the 30th of July, and the surgeon attended the wounded woman for five days; at the end of which time she said to her daughter, 'Peggy, you may go out of the room, for I want to sleep.' During the absence of the daughter Taunton entered the room, and struck Mrs. Phipps so forcibly on the neck with a hatchet, that her head hung over one side of the bed.

The horrid murder being at length committed, Taunton threw down the instrument of death, and went to drink at a public house at about a mile distant; and the surgeon coming soon after to attend his duty, and finding Mrs. Phipps dead, dispatched the ostler and another man in search of the

murderer. It was not long before they found him, and, bringing him back to Colnbrook, the surgeon hinted to him that the most fatal consequences would probably ensue from the crime of which he had been guilty.

The coroner's jury, being summoned on the occasion, gave a verdict that Taunton had been guilty of the wilful murder of Mrs. Phipps; on which he was taken before a magistrate, who committed him to New Prison.

In this place he was visited by many persons, who conversed with him on his unhappy situation; and one of them hinting his fears that he was guilty, Taunton acknowledged that he was, and expressed his sorrow for the crime; but said it was now too late to remedy the evil.

His friend then inquired what could induce him to commit such an atrocious crime; to which he answered that she had traduced his character, by telling lies of him in the neighbourhood.

Being brought to trial at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey, he produced several persons who deposed that he had been, at times, so much out of his mind, that he was not master of his own conduct: and one of these in particular swore that he had at one time attempted to destroy himself by drowning, and at another by hanging; but this plea being thought unsatisfactory by the jury, he was capitally convicted, and sentenced to die.

After conviction he gave the fullest proof of being in possession of his intellectual faculties; exercising himself in the offices of devotion, and receiving the sacrament from the hands of the Ordinary of Newgate.

He was tried on Saturday, the 9th of September, 1769, and ordered for execution on the Monday following. A most extraordinary shower of rain falling that morning, he was taken from Newgate in a hackney coach, the Ordinary attending him; and the executioner riding behind; and in this manner he was conveyed to the place of death.

On his arrival at the fatal tree a person who had formerly known him went into the cart, and assisted him in his devo-

tion. After the body had hung the usual time it was cut down, and carried to Surgeons' Hall for dissection.

This malefactor suffered at Tyburn on the 11th of September, 1769.

It is very seldom that we hear of unmarried persons living together as man and wife with any tolerable degree of happiness; and how, indeed, is it to be expected they should?—Those, who have mutual reason to reproach each other with their crimes, will hardly fail to avail themselves of every opportunity of doing so; for the guilty mind conceives that it lifts a load from its own breast when it seeks to criminate another.

From the whole of this narrative we ought to learn that there is no happiness in this life equal to that which is to be found in the married state. Trifling difficulties may occur; trifling differences may arise between the married pair; but their mutual interest, and their mutual love, will soon reconcile all differences, and overcome all difficulties. The vow which has been made at the altar will perpetually recur to the honest mind:—the man will consider himself as obliged to the woman who once honored him with her hand; nor will the woman deem herself less obliged to the man who undertook to be her guardian and protector for life.

## THE REVEREND JAMES HACKMAN

### *Executed for Murder*

THE shocking and truly lamentable case interested all ranks of people, who pitied the murderer's fate, conceiving him stimulated to commit the horrid crime through love and madness. Pamphlets and poems were written on

the occasion, and the crime was long the common topic of conversation.

The object of Mr. Hackman's love renders his case still more singular.

Miss Reay had been the mistress of Lord Sandwich near twenty years, was the mother of nine children, and nearly double the age of Mr. Hackman.

This murder affords a melancholy proof that there is no act so contrary to reason that men will not commit when under the dominion of their passions. In short, it is impossible to convey an idea of the impression it made; and the manner in which it was done created horror and pity in every feeling mind.

The Rev. James Hackman was born at Gosport, in Hampshire, and originally designed for trade; but he was too volatile in disposition to submit to the drudgery of the shop or counting-house. His parents, willing to promote his interest as far as lay in their power, purchased him an ensign's commission in the 68th regiment of foot. He had not been long in the army when he was sent to command a recruiting party; and, being at Huntingdon, he was frequently invited to dine with Lord Sandwich, who had a seat in that neighbourhood. Here it was that he first became acquainted with Miss Reay, who lived under the protection of that nobleman.

This lady was the daughter of a staymaker in Covent Garden, and served her apprenticeship to a mantua-maker in George's Court, St. John's Lane, Clerkenwell. She was bound when only thirteen; and, during her apprenticeship, was taken notice of by the nobleman above mentioned, who took her under his protection, and treated her with every mark of tenderness. No sooner had Mr. Hackman seen her than he became enamoured of her, though she had then lived nineteen years with his lordship. Finding he could not obtain preferment in the army, he turned his thoughts to the church, and entered into orders. Soon after he obtained the living of Wiverton, in Norfolk, which was only about Christmas pre-

ceding the shocking deed which cost him his life; so that it may be said he never enjoyed it.

It is probable that Mr. Hackman imagined that there was a mutual passion—that Miss Reay had the same regard for him as he had for her. Love and madness are often little better than synonymous terms; for, had Mr. Hackman not been blinded by a bewitching passion, he could never have imagined that Miss Reay would have left the family of a noble lord at the head of one of the highest departments of the state, in order to live in an humble station. Those who have been long accustomed to affluence, and even profusion, seldom choose to lower their flags. However, he was still tormented by this unhappy, irregular, and ungovernable passion, which, in an unhappy moment, led him to commit the crime for which he suffered.

Miss Reay was extremely fond of music, and, as her noble protector was in a high rank, we need not be surprised to find that frequent concerts were performed both in London and at Hinchinbrook: at the latter place Mr. Hackman was generally of the party, and his attention to her at those times was very great. How long he had been in London previous to this affair is not certainly known, but at that time he lodged in Duke's Court, St. Martin's Lane. On the morning of the 7th of April, 1779, he sat some time in his closet, reading 'Blair's Sermons;' but in the evening, he took a walk to the Admiralty, where he saw Miss Reay go into the coach along with Signora Galli, who attended her. The coach drove to Covent Garden Theatre, where she staid to see the performance of 'Love in a Village.' Mr. Hackman went into the theatre at the same time; but, not being able to contain the violence of his passion, returned, and again went to his lodgings, and, having loaded two pistols, went to the playhouse, where he waited till the play was over. Seeing Miss Reay ready to step into the coach, he took a pistol in each hand, one of which he discharged against her, which killed her on the spot, and the other at himself, which, however, did not take effect.



He then beat himself with the butt end on his head, in order to destroy himself, so fully bent was he on the destruction of both. After some struggle he was secured, his wounds dressed, and then he was carried before Sir John Fielding, who committed him to Tothillfields' Bridewell, and next to Newgate, where a person was appointed to attend him, lest he should lay violent hands on himself. In Newgate, as he knew he had no favour to expect, he prepared himself for the awful change he was about to make. He had dined with his sister on the day the murder was committed; and, in the afternoon, wrote a letter to her husband, Mr. Booth, an eminent attorney, acquainting him of his resolution of destroying himself, desiring him to sell what effects he should leave behind him, to pay a small debt; but this letter was not sent, for it was found in his pocket.

On the trial Mr. Macnamara deposed that, on Wednesday, the 7th day of April, on seeing Miss Reay, with whom he had some little acquaintance, in some difficulties in getting from the playhouse, he offered his assistance to hand her to her coach; and just as they were in the Piazzas, very near the carriage, he heard the report of a pistol, and felt an impression on his right arm, which arm she held with her left, and instantly dropped. He thought at first that the pistol had been fired through wantonness, and that she had fallen from the fright, and therefore fell upon his knees to help her up; but, finding his hands bloody, he then conceived an idea of what had happened, and, by the assistance of a link-boy, got the deceased into the Shakespeare Tavern, where he first saw the prisoner, after he was secured. He asked him some questions relative to the fact and the cause; and his answer was, that neither the time nor place were proper to resolve him. He asked his name, and was told Hackman: he knew a Mr. Booth, in Craven Street, and desired he might be sent for.

He asked to see the lady; to which he (the witness) objected, and had her removed to a private room. From the impression he felt, and the great quantity of blood about

him, he grew sick, and went home; and knew nothing more about it.

Mary Anderson, a fruit-woman, deposed that, just as the play was over, she saw two ladies and a gentleman coming out of the play-house, and a gentleman in black following them. Lord Sandwich's coach was called. When the carriage came up the gentleman handed the other lady into it. The lady that was shot stood behind, when the gentleman in black came up, laid hold of her gown, and pulled two pistols out of his pocket: the one in his right hand he discharged at the lady, and the other, in his left, he discharged at himself. They fell feet to feet. He beat himself violently over the head with his pistol, and desired somebody would kill him.

Richard Blandy, the constable, swore to the finding two letters in the prisoner's pocket, which he delivered to Mr. Campbell, the master of the Shakespeare Tavern, in Covent Garden.

Mr. Mahon, an apothecary, corroborated the evidence of the fruit-woman: he wrenched the pistol out of his hand, with which he was beating himself, as he lay on the ground—took him to his house, dressed his wounds, and accompanied him to the Shakespeare.

Denis O'Brian, a surgeon, examined the wound of the deceased, and found it mortal.

Being called upon for his defence, he addressed the Court in the following words:—

'I should not have troubled the Court with the examination of witnesses to support the charge against me, had I not thought that the pleading guilty to the indictment gave an indication of contemning death, not suitable to my present condition, and was, in some measure, being accessory to a second peril of my life; and I likewise thought that the justice of my country ought to be satisfied by suffering my offence to be proved, and the fact established by evidence.

'I stand here this day the most wretched of human beings, and confess myself criminal in a high degree; yet while I ac-

knowledge, with shame and repentance, that my determination against my own life was formal and complete, I protest, with that regard to truth which becomes my situation, that the will to destroy her, who was ever dearer to me than life, was never mine till a momentary frenzy overcame me, and induced me to commit the deed I now deplore. The letter, which I meant for my brother-in-law after my decease, will have its due weight, as to this point, with good men.

'Before this dreadful act, I trust nothing will be found in the tenor of my life which the common charity of mankind will not excuse. I have no wish to avoid the punishment which the laws of my country appoint for my crime; but, being already too unhappy to feel a punishment in death or a satisfaction in life, I submit myself with penitence and patience to the disposal and judgment of Almighty God, and to the consequences of this inquiry into my conduct and intention.'

Then was read the following letter:—

'My dear Frederic,—When this reaches you I shall be no more; but do not let my unhappy fate distress you too much: I have strove against it as long as possible, but it now overpowers me. You well know where my affections were placed: my having by some means or other lost hers (an idea which I could not support) has driven me to madness. The world will condemn me, but your good heart will pity me. God bless you, my dear Frederic! Would I had a sum to leave you, to convince you of my great regard! You was my only friend. I have hid one circumstance from you, which gives me great pain. I own Mr. Knight, of Gosport, one hundred pounds, for which he has the writings of my houses; but I hope in God, when they are sold, and all other matters collected, there will be nearly enough to settle our account. May Almighty God bless you and yours with comfort and happiness; and may you ever be a stranger to the pangs I now feel! May Heaven protect my beloved woman, and forgive this act, which alone could relieve me from a world of mis-

ery I have long endured! Oh! if it should ever be in your power to do her an act of friendship, remember your faithful friend, J. Hackman.'

The jury immediately returned their fatal verdict. The unhappy man heard the sentence pronounced against him with calm resignation to his fate, and employed the very short time allowed murderers after conviction in repentance and prayer.

During the procession to the fatal tree at Tyburn he seemed much affected, and said but little; and when he arrived at Tyburn, and got out of the coach and mounted the cart, he took leave of Dr. Porter and the Ordinary.

After some time spent in prayer, he was turned off, on April the 19th, 1779; and, having hung the usual time, his body was carried to Surgeons' Hall for dissection.

Such was the end of a young gentleman who might have been an ornament to his country, the delight of his friends, and a comfort to his relations, had he not been led away by the influence of an unhappy passion.

The dreadful effects of this passion—and well may it be termed 'love and madness'—we have found perverting reason in the lower ranks of society.

Thomas Giles, a barber, in the city of Worcester, had been 'crossed in love.' His beloved was a servant girl, who, preferring the suit of a cobbler, the rejected swain, in a fit of frenzy, went to the house of the girl's master, and with one of his razors cut her throat from ear to ear. He then turned the sharp instrument upon himself in the same manner, and both expired.

The coroner's jury brought in their verdict 'Felo de se' respecting himself, and 'Wilful murder' with regard to the girl.

Like all those who kill themselves, his body was buried in a cross road, and a stake driven through it with every mark of ignominy.

## ANNE BROADRIC

*Indicted for Murder*

MISS ANNE BROADRIC, who assassinated Mr. Errington, on Friday, the 15th of May, 1795, at his seat near Grays, in the county of Essex, was a young lady of considerable accomplishments, a fine figure, and superior to the generality of her sex in personal charms. Three or four years after Mr. Errington's well-known divorce from his former wife, he addressed Miss Broadric with the utmost solicitude; but it is not true that he had seduced her, as she had previously lived with a Captain Robinson. He lived with her nearly three years, with every appearance of domestic comfort. After about twelve months, however, Mr. Errington saw another beautiful object, possessed of a large fortune, to whom he transferred his affections, and, after a little time, he gave her his hand. On this he settled what he deemed a suitable provision on Miss Broadric, stated to her explicitly the variation of his sentiments, and added that he never could see her more! After the first agonies of her grief, she sent the most affectionate remonstrance on his conduct, and requested, as the last boon, that he would grant her one interview. This was refused: she still persisted, by letters, to move him to grant her this last request; but, finding him inexorable, she wrote him "That, if nothing could induce him to do her this act of common justice, he must prepare himself for the fatal alternative, as she was determined *that he should not long survive his infidelity!*"

Receiving no answer whatever, after the lapse of a month, she dressed herself elegantly, very soon, on the Friday morning, went to the Three Nuns' Inn, in Whitechapel, and took a place in the Southend coach, which passed very near Mr. Errington's house: she got out at the avenue gate, and, in

her way up, was recognised by Mr. Errington, who told his wife that tormenting woman, Broadric, was coming; but that he should soon get rid of her, if she, Mrs. Errington, would retire a few minutes. Mrs. Errington, however, did not consent to this, but prevailed upon her husband to go up stairs into the drawing-room, and leave the interview to her management. Miss Broadric, being shown in, asked for Mr. Errington: she was told he was not at home. 'I am not to be so satisfied, madam,' replied Miss Broadric; 'I know the ways of this house, unfortunately, too well, and therefore, with your leave, I'll search for him!' on which she rushed up into the drawing-room, and, finding him there, she drew a small brass-barrelled pistol, with a new hagged flint, from her pocket, and presenting it at his left side, in a direction for his heart, exclaimed, 'I am come, Errington, to perform my dreadful promise!' and instantly pulled the trigger. Surprised at his not falling, she said, 'Good God, I fear I have not dispatched you! but, come, deliver me into the hands of justice!' Mrs. Errington bursting into the room, and seeing her husband bleeding, fainted away. Mr. Errington now remonstrated with her, and asked her 'if he had ever deserved this at her hands, after the care he had taken to settle her so comfortably in the world?' To this she gave no other answer than by a melancholy shake of her head. Mr. Miller, a neighbouring surgeon, being called in, found that the ball had penetrated at the lowest rib, cut three ribs asunder, and then passed round the back, and lodged under the shoulder bone, from whence every painful effort was made to extract it, but in vain. Mr. Button, a magistrate now came, who took the examination of Mr. Errington after his wound was dressed. He asked Miss Broadric what could induce her to commit such an act of extreme violence. Her answer was 'That she was determined that neither Mr. Errington nor herself should long outlive her lost peace of mind!' Mr. Errington entreated of the magistrate not to detain her in custody, but let her depart, as he was sure he should do well; but this request Miss

Broadric refused to accept, and the magistrate to grant. Her commitment being made out, she was conveyed that evening to Chelmsford gaol, where she remained tolerably composed till she heard of Mr. Errington's death, when she burst into a flood of tears, and lamented bitterly that she had been the cause of his death. The coroner's inquest sat on the body on Tuesday, the 19th of May, and brought in their verdict, 'Wilful murder, by the hands of Anne Broadric.' Mr. Errington was in the thirty-ninth year of his age, and possessed a very large landed and personal property.

Some months before this melancholy event the following letter was addressed to Mr. Errington by Miss Broadric, dated the 11th of September, 1794:—

'Dear Errington,—That you have betrayed and abandoned the most tender and affectionate heart that ever warmed a human bosom, cannot be denied by any person who is in the least acquainted with me. Wretched and miserable as I have been since you left me, there is still a method remaining that would suspend, for a time, the melancholy sufferings and distress which I labour under at this moment; and still, inhuman as thou art, I am half persuaded, when I tell you the power is in your hands, that you will not withhold it from me.—What I allude to is the permission of seeing you once more, and, perhaps, for the last time. If you consider that the request comes from a woman you once flattered into a belief of her being the sole possessor of your love, you may not perhaps think it unreasonable. Recollect, however, Errington, ere you send a refusal, that the roaring of the tempest, and the lightnings from heaven, are not more terrible than the rage and vengeance of a disappointed woman. Hitherto you can only answer for the weakness and frailty of my nature. There is a further knowledge of my disposition you must have if you do not grant me the favour demanded. I wish it to come voluntarily from yourself, or else I will force it from you. Believe me, in that case I would seek you in the farthest corner of the globe, rush into your

presence, and, with the same rapture that nerved the arm of Charlotte Cordet, when she assassinated the monster Marat, would I put an end to the existence of a man, who is the author of all the agonies and care that at present oppress the heart of

*Anne Broadric.*

‘P.S. This comes by William, (the servant you have discarded on my account) who has orders to wait for your answer.’

On Friday, July the 17th, at six o’clock, Anne Broadric was conveyed from the gaol, in a chaise, to a room in the shire-hall; and about ten minutes before the Lord Chief Baron Macdonald, the sheriffs, and magistrates, appeared on the bench, she was conveyed into the bail-dock in the criminal court, attended by three ladies and her apothecary: she was dressed in mourning, without powder; and, after the first perturbations were over, occasioned by the concourse of surrounding spectators, she sat down on a chair prepared for her, and was tolerably composed, except at intervals, when she discovered violent agitations, as her mind became affected by various objects and circumstances. When the indictment was reading she paid a marked attention to it; and on the words, ‘that on the right breast of the said G. Errington she did wilfully and feloniously inflict one mortal wound,’ etc. she exclaimed, ‘Oh, my great God!’ and burst into a torrent of tears.

The prosecution for the crown was opened by Mr. Garrow, who demonstrated the painful execution of this office by the humane and affecting exordium with which he addressed the jury, preparatory to the statement of the evidence he was instructed to adduce. He thought it his duty, however, to inform them what his learned brethren, who had the conduct of the defence of the unhappy female at the bar, were precluded by the rules of law from stating, viz. that the defence intended to be set up was unquestionably of great importance, requiring their most serious deliberation: it was



no less than the plea of lunacy; and therefore it became their peculiar duty, as jurymen, before they visited a deed with death, to be perfectly satisfied in their own minds that the prisoner committing it was in the possession of her reasoning faculties; otherwise it must have been insanity, and not the moral agent, which perpetrated the bloody act.

George Bailey sworn—said he was servant to the deceased, Mr. Errington; saw Miss Broadric come into the kitchen on the 15th of May last; did not know her; she asked whether Mr. Errington was at home. He answered 'Yes'; and desired the gardener to show the lady into the parlour, while he put on his shoes, and went up to inform his master, then in the drawing-room; that he saw Mrs. Errington and the lady meet at the parlour door. (Here Miss Broadric shook her head and groaned deeply.) He perceived that the ladies were strangers to each other. Miss Broadric asked Mrs. Errington if Mr. Errington was to be spoken with. She answered 'Yes, ma'am; pray walk up stairs.' His mistress went up first; he returned to the kitchen, and in the space of a minute he heard the report of a pistol, the shrieks of his mistress, and also his master cry out and groan! He ran up stairs, and, passing some workmen, desired them to go with him, as something dreadful had happened. On entering the drawing-room he beheld his master all over blood, and leaning with his left hand on his right breast, who exclaimed, 'Oh God, I am shot! I am murdered!' Mrs. Errington instantly ordered him to take that woman into custody, for she had murdered her husband; on this Miss Broadric threw a pistol out of her left hand on the carpet, and laughed, crying out, 'Here, take me! hang me, and do what you will with me; I don't care now!' He told the workmen to take care of the prisoner till he came back: he then ran to the stable, took a horse, and rode for Mr. Childers, the surgeon, about a mile off; desired him to mount the horse, and make haste to his master, who was shot: he followed soon after with two constables, when he found the doctor and Mrs. Errington with

his master. Miss Broadric he saw afterwards in the parlour below: that, on seeing her right hand in her pocket, he told the constable he thought she had another pistol in her pocket; that the constable went behind her, and took hold of both her arms, when she said 'What are you going to do?' He replied, 'Not to hurt you in the least, madam, but it is our duty to put these handcuffs upon you;' which they did. She rejoined, 'Let me put my hand in my pocket first.' The constables answered 'No!' She said 'I want to give you something.' 'Some other time,' replied the other. The witness then asked her whether she had not another pistol. She answered 'I have!' and in a lower tone of voice said to him, 'This I intended for myself!' He then sent for a woman servant, and desired her to search her; which she did, and immediately drew another pistol from her pocket. (The pistols were here produced, and sworn to be the same.)

John Eves lived at the Bull Inn, Whitechapel. Miss Broadric, about the 11th of May, gave him the following letter to carry to Mr. Errington; he delivered it to him on the 13th, at Grays, who asked him whether it did not come from Miss Broadric. He replied it did. Mr. Errington then bade him take it back, as he should see her at the fair; he took the letter to her again, unopened, the next day.

'Dear Sir,—As I intend going to Southend on Wednesday, I wish to speak a few words to you on money affairs, as I have received no answer to the letter from Mr.— (Mr. Errington's solicitor). I fear you are deceived in the person you intrust. I wish you would meet me at the Dog and Partridge, at Stifford, as I have not had the money you promised me I should receive.'

Here the evidence for the crown was closed, and several persons were called in, who proved the prisoner's insanity.

The Lord Chief Baron, before he summed up the evidence, called the attention of the jury to the particular plea of insanity, on which the defence of the prisoner had been rested; no denial having been set up against the perpetration

of the deed, of which, indeed, there had been given the fullest and clearest evidence. The law certainly required that the will should accompany the act, to constitute a felonious murder. The defence in the present case was, that the prisoner was incapable of lending her will to the perpetration of the crime with which she stands charged. His lordship here entered into an illustrative detail in support of this general proposition. He said the unhappy woman laughing in the midst of an act of horror bore a strong appearance of mental derangement; indeed this was often made a test of madness in the finest-wrought theatrical representations. The letter which had been given to the magistrate, and the receipt of which he had so humanely and wisely expostulated against, did not convey any idea of insanity: though the chain of such very tumultuous circumstances, for so long an antecedent period as six months, certainly did carry with them strong symptoms that the person acting under them was unlike to rational persons. The family derangements which had been stated were not of themselves sufficient evidence; but were certainly a strong ground-work on which to build other circumstances more immediately applicable to the individual herself.

On the whole, if the jury thought the latent seeds of derangement, after a convulsive struggle of six months, had been called forth on this horrible occasion so as to overwhelm the senses of the unhappy prisoner, they were bound in conscience to acquit her. If, on the other hand, they believed that it was the preparatory pangs of a mind intent on gratifying its revenge by the death of its object, they must find her guilty; but they scarcely need be told that, should a doubt remain on their minds, common charity required that the balance should turn in the prisoner's favour.

The jury consulted about two minutes, and then gave their verdict—Not Guilty, to the general satisfaction of the whole Court.

The judges, on leaving the town, after the assizes were

over, directed that Miss Broadric should be examined before two magistrates, that she might be safely removed, under their order, to the place of her settlement, with a particular recommendation annexed thereto, that she might be taken all possible care of.

**M U R D E R**  
**A N D M Y S T E R Y**



## *De Mortuis . . .*



**J O H N   C O L L I E R**

**D**R. RANKIN was a large and rawboned man on whom the newest suit at once appeared outdated, like a suit in a photograph of twenty years ago. This was due to the squareness and flatness of his torso, which might have been put together by a manufacturer of packing cases. His face also had a wooden and a roughly constructed look; his hair was wiglike and resentful of the comb. He had those huge and clumsy hands which can be an asset to a doctor in a small upstate town where people still retain a rural relish for paradox, thinking that the more apeline the paw, the more precise it can be in the delicate business of a tonsillectomy.

This conclusion was perfectly justified in the case of Dr. Rankin. For example, on this particular fine morning, though his task was nothing more ticklish than the cementing over of a large patch on his cellar floor, he managed those large and clumsy hands with all the unflurried certainty of one who would never leave a sponge within or create an unsightly scar without.

The Doctor surveyed his handiwork from all angles. He added a touch here and a touch there till he had achieved a smoothness altogether professional. He swept up a few last crumbs of soil and dropped them into the furnace. He paused before putting away the pick and shovel he had been using, and found occasion for yet another artistic sweep of his trowel, which made the new surface precisely flush with the surrounding floor. At this moment of supreme concen-

tration the porch door upstairs slammed with the report of a minor piece of artillery, which, appropriately enough, caused Dr. Rankin to jump as if he had been shot.

The Doctor lifted a frowning face and an attentive ear. He heard two pairs of heavy feet clump across the resonant floor of the porch. He heard the house door opened and the visitors enter the hall, with which his cellar communicated by a short flight of steps. He heard whistling and then the voices of Buck and Bud crying, "Doc! Hi, Doc! They're biting!"

Whether the Doctor was not inclined for fishing that day, or whether, like others of his large and heavy type, he experienced an especially sharp, unsociable reaction on being suddenly startled, or whether he was merely anxious to finish undisturbed the job in hand and proceed to more important duties, he did not respond immediately to the inviting outcry of his friends. Instead, he listened while it ran its natural course, dying down at last into a puzzled and fretful dialogue.

"I guess he's out."

"I'll write a note—say we're at the creek, to come on down."

"We could tell Irene."

"But she's not here, either. You'd think *she'd* be around."

"Ought to be, by the look of the place."

"You said it, Bud. Just look at this table. You could write your name—"

"Sh-h-h! Look!"

Evidently the last speaker had noticed that the cellar door was ajar and that a light was shining below. Next moment the door was pushed wide open and Bud and Buck looked down.

"Why, Doc! There you are!"

"Didn't you hear us yelling?"

The Doctor, not too pleased at what he had overheard, nevertheless smiled his rather wooden smile as his two



friends made their way down the steps. "I thought I heard someone," he said.

"We was bawling our heads off," Buck said. "Thought nobody was home. Where's Irene?"

"Visiting," said the Doctor. "She's gone visiting."

"Hey, what goes on?" said Bud. "What are you doing? Burying one of your patients, or what?"

"Oh, there's been water seeping up through the floor," said the Doctor. "I figured it might be some spring opened up or something."

"You don't say!" said Bud, assuming instantly the high ethical standpoint of the realtor. "Gee, Doc, I sold you this property. Don't say I fixed you up with a dump where there's an underground spring."

"There was water," said the Doctor.

"Yes, but, Doc, you can look on that geological map the Kiwanis Club got up. There's not a better section of subsoil in the town."

"Looks like he sold you a pup," said Buck, grinning.

"No," said Bud. "Look. When the Doc came here he was green. You'll admit he was green. The things he didn't know!"

"He bought Ted Webber's jalopy," said Buck.

"He'd have bought the Jessop place if I'd let him," said Bud. "But I wouldn't give him a bum steer."

"Not the poor, simple city slicker from Poughkeepsie," said Buck.

"Some people would have taken him," said Bud. "Maybe some people did. Not me. I recommended this property. He and Irene moved straight in as soon as they was married. I wouldn't have put the Doc on to a dump where there'd be a spring under the foundations."

"Oh, forget it," said the Doctor, embarrassed by this conscientiousness. "I guess it was just the heavy rains."

"By gosh!" Buck said, glancing at the besmeared point of the pickaxe. "You certainly went deep enough. Right down into the clay, huh?"

"That's four feet down, the clay," Bud said.

"Eighteen inches," said the Doctor.

"Four feet," said Bud. "I can show you on the map."

"Come on. No arguments," said Buck. "How's about it, Doc? An hour or two at the creek, eh? They're biting."

"Can't do it, boys," said the Doctor. "I've got to see a patient or two."

"Aw, live and let live, Doc," Bud said. "Give 'em a chance to get better. Are you going to depopulate the whole darn town?"

The Doctor looked down, smiled, and muttered, as he always did when this particular jest was trotted out. "Sorry, boys," he said. "I can't make it."

"Well," said Bud, disappointed, "I suppose we'd better get along. How's Irene?"

"Irene?" said the Doctor. "Never better. She's gone visiting. Albany. Got the eleven-o'clock train."

"Eleven o'clock?" said Buck. "For Albany?"

"Did I say Albany?" said the Doctor. "Watertown, I meant."

"Friends in Watertown?" Buck asked.

"Mrs. Slater," said the Doctor. "Mr. and Mrs. Slater. Lived next door to 'em when she was a kid, Irene said, over on Sycamore Street."

"Slater?" said Bud. "Next door to Irene. No."

"Oh, yes," said the Doctor. "She was telling me all about them last night. She got a letter. Seems this Mrs. Slater looked after her when her mother was in the hospital one time."

"No," said Bud.

"That's what she told me," said the Doctor. "Of course, it was a good many years ago."

"Look, Doc," said Buck. "Bud and I were raised in this town. We've known Irene's folks all our lives. We were in and out of their house all the time. There was never anybody next door called Slater."

"Perhaps," said the Doctor, "she married again, this woman. Perhaps it was a different name."

Bud shook his head.

"What time did Irene go to the station?" Buck asked.

"Oh, about a quarter of an hour ago," said the Doctor.

"You didn't drive her?" said Buck.

"She walked," said the Doctor.

"We came down Main Street," Buck said. "We didn't meet her."

"Maybe she walked across the pasture," said the Doctor.

"That's a tough walk with a suitcase," said Buck.

"She just had a couple of things in a little bag," said the Doctor.

Bud was still shaking his head.

Buck looked at Bud, and then at the pick, at the new, damp cement on the floor. "Jesus Christ!" he said.

"Oh, God, Doc!" Bud said. "A guy like you!"

"What in the name of heaven are you two bloody fools thinking?" asked the Doctor. "What are you trying to say?"

"A spring!" said Bud. "I ought to have known right away it wasn't any spring."

The Doctor looked at his cement-work, at the pick, at the large, worried faces of his two friends. His own face turned livid. "Am I crazy?" he said. "Or are you? You suggest that I've—that Irene—my wife—oh, go on! Get out! Yes, go and get the sheriff. Tell him to come here and start digging. You—get out!"

Bud and Buck looked at each other, shifted their feet, and stood still again.

"Go on," said the Doctor.

"I don't know," said Bud.

"It's not as if he didn't have the provocation," Buck said.

"God knows," Bud said.

"God knows," Buck said. "You know. I know. The whole town knows. But try telling it to a jury."

The Doctor put his hand to his head. "What's that?" he said. "What is it? Now what are you saying? What do you mean?"

"If this ain't being on the spot!" said Buck. "Doc, you can see how it is. It takes some thinking. We've been friends right from the start. Damn good friends."

"But we've got to think," said Bud. "It's serious. Provocation or not, there's a law in the land. There's such a thing as being an accomplice."

"You were talking about provocation," said the Doctor.

"You're right," said Buck. "And you're our friend. And if ever it could be called justified—"

"We've got to fix this somehow," said Bud.

"Justified?" said the Doctor.

"You were bound to get wised up sooner or later," said Buck.

"We could have told you," said Bud. "Only—what the hell?"

"We could," said Buck. "And we nearly did. Five years ago. Before ever you married her. You hadn't been here six months, but we sort of cottoned to you. Thought of giving you a hint. Spoke about it. Remember, Bud?"

Bud nodded. "Funny," he said. "I came right out in the open about that Jessop property. I wouldn't let you buy that, Doc. But getting married, that's something else again. We could have told you."

"We're that much responsible," Buck said.

"I'm fifty," said the Doctor. "I suppose it's pretty old for Irene."

"If you was Johnny Weissmuller at the age of twenty-one, it wouldn't make any difference," said Buck.

"I know a lot of people think she's not exactly a perfect wife," said the Doctor. "Maybe she's not. She's young. She's full of life."

"Oh, skip it!" said Buck sharply, looking at the raw cement. "Skip it, Doc, for God's sake."

The Doctor brushed his hand across his face. "Not everybody wants the same thing," he said. "I'm a sort of dry fellow. I don't open up very easily. Irene—you'd call her gay."

"You said it," said Buck.

"She's no housekeeper," said the Doctor. "I know it. But that's not the only thing a man wants. She's enjoyed herself."

"Yeah," said Buck. "She did."

"That's what I love," said the Doctor. "Because I'm not that way myself. She's not very deep, mentally. All right. Say she's stupid. I don't care. Lazy. No system. Well, I've got plenty of system. She's enjoyed herself. It's beautiful. It's innocent. Like a child."

"Yes. If that was all," Buck said.

"But," said the Doctor, turning his eyes full on him, "you seem to know there was more."

"Everybody knows it," said Buck.

"A decent, straightforward guy comes to a place like this and marries the town floozy," Bud said bitterly. "And nobody'll tell him. Everybody just watches."

"And laughs," said Buck. "You and me, Bud, as well as the rest."

"We told her to watch her step," said Bud. "We warned her."

"Everybody warned her," said Buck. "But people get fed up. When it got to truck-drivers—"

"It was never us, Doc," said Bud, earnestly. "Not after you came along, anyway."

"The town'll be on your side," said Buck.

"That won't mean much when the case comes to trial in the county seat," said Bud.

"Oh!" cried the Doctor, suddenly. "What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"It's up to you, Bud," said Buck. "I can't turn him in."

"Take it easy, Doc," said Bud. "Calm down. Look, Buck. When we came in here the street was empty, wasn't it?"

"I guess so," said Buck. "Anyway, nobody saw us come down cellar."

"And we haven't been down," Bud said, addressing himself forcefully to the Doctor. "Get that, Doc? We shouted upstairs, hung around a minute or two, and cleared out. But we never came down into this cellar."

"I wish you hadn't," the Doctor said heavily.

"All you have to do is say Irene went out for a walk and never came back," said Buck. "Bud and I can swear we saw her headed out of town with a fellow in a tan roadster. Everybody'll believe that, all right. We'll fix it. But later. Now we'd better scam."

"And remember. We was never down here," Bud said. "So long."

Buck and Bud ascended the steps, moving with a rather absurd degree of caution. "You'd better get that . . . that thing covered up," Buck said over his shoulder.

Left alone, the Doctor sat down on an empty box, holding his head with both hands. He was still sitting like this when the porch door slammed again. This time he did not start. He listened. The house door opened and closed. A voice cried, "Yoo-hoo! Yoo-hoo! I'm back."

The Doctor rose slowly to his feet. "I'm down here, Irene!" he called.

The cellar door opened. A young woman stood at the head of the steps. "Can you beat it?" she said. "I missed the damn train."

"Oh!" said the Doctor. "Did you come back across the field?"

"Yes, like a fool," she said. "I could have hitched a ride and caught the train up the line. Only I didn't think. If you'd run me over to the junction, I could still make it."

"Maybe," said the Doctor. "Did you meet anyone coming back?"

“Not a soul,” she said. “Aren’t you finished with that old job yet?”

“I’m afraid I’ll have to take it all up again,” said the Doctor. “Come down here, my dear, and I’ll show you.”

# *The Sailor-Boy's Tale*



**I S A K   D I N E S E N**

**T**HE barque *Charlotte* was on her way from Marseille to Athens, in grey weather, on a high sea, after three days' heavy gale. A small sailor-boy, named Simon, stood on the wet, swinging deck, held on to a shroud, and looked up towards the drifting clouds, and to the upper top-gallant yard of the main-mast.

A bird, that had sought refuge upon the mast, had got her feet entangled in some loose tackle-yarn of the halliard, and, high up there, struggled to get free. The boy on the deck could see her wings flapping and her head turning from side to side.

Through his own experience of life he had come to the conviction that in this world everyone must look after himself, and expect no help from others. But the mute, deadly fight kept him fascinated for more than an hour. He wondered what kind of bird it would be. These last days a number of birds had come to settle in the barque's rigging: swallows, quails, and a pair of peregrine falcons; he believed that this bird was a peregrine falcon. He remembered how, many years ago, in his own country and near his home, he had once seen a peregrine falcon quite close, sitting on a stone and flying straight up from it. Perhaps this was the same bird. He thought: "That bird is like me. Then she was there, and now she is here."

At that a fellow-feeling rose in him, a sense of common



tragedy; he stood looking at the bird with his heart in his mouth. There were none of the sailors about to make fun of him; he began to think out how he might go up by the shrouds to help the falcon out. He brushed his hair back and pulled up his sleeves, gave the deck round him a great glance, and climbed up. He had to stop a couple of times in the swaying rigging.

It was indeed, he found when he got to the top of the mast, a peregrine falcon. As his head was on a level with hers, she gave up her struggle, and looked at him with a pair of angry, desperate, yellow eyes. He had to take hold of her with one hand while he got his knife out, and cut off the tackle-yarn. He was scared as he looked down, but at the same time he felt that he had been ordered up by nobody, but that this was his own venture, and this gave him a proud, steadying sensation, as if the sea and the sky, the ship, the bird and himself were all one. Just as he had freed the falcon, she hacked him in the thumb, so that the blood ran, and he nearly let her go. He grew angry with her, and gave her a clout on the head, then he put her inside his jacket, and climbed down again.

When he reached the deck the mate and the cook were standing there, looking up; they roared to him to ask what he had had to do in the mast. He was so tired that the tears were in his eyes. He took the falcon out and showed her to them, and she kept still within his hands. They laughed and walked off. Simon set the falcon down, stood back and watched her. After a while he reflected that she might not be able to get up from the slippery deck, so he caught her once more, walked away with her and placed her upon a bolt of canvas. A little after she began to trim her feathers, made two or three sharp jerks forward, and then suddenly flew off. The boy could follow her flight above the troughs of the grey sea. He thought: "There flies my falcon."

When the *Charlotte* came home, Simon signed aboard another ship, and two years later he was a light hand on the

schooner *Hebe* lying at Bodø, high up on the coast of Norway, to buy herrings.

To the great herring-markets of Bodø ships came together from all corners of the world; here were Swedish, Finnish and Russian boats, a forest of masts, and on shore a turbulent, irregular display of life, with many languages spoken, and mighty fights. On the shore booths had been set up, and the Lapps, small yellow people, noiseless in their movements, with watchful eyes, whom Simon had never seen before, came down to sell bead-embroidered leather-goods. It was April, the sky and the sea were so clear that it was difficult to hold one's eyes up against them—salt, infinitely wide, and filled with bird-shrieks—as if someone were incessantly whetting invisible knives, on all sides, high up in Heaven.

Simon was amazed at the lightness of these April evenings. He knew no geography, and did not assign it to the latitude, but he took it as a sign of an unwonted good-will in the Universe, a favour. Simon had been small for his age all his life, but this last winter he had grown, and had become strong of limb. That good luck, he felt, must spring from the very same source as the sweetness of the weather, from a new benevolence in the world. He had been in need of such encouragement, for he was timid by nature; now he asked for no more. The rest he felt to be his own affair. He went about slowly, and proudly.

One evening he was ashore with land-leave, and walked up to the booth of a small Russian trader, a Jew who sold gold watches. All the sailors knew that his watches were made from bad metal, and would not go, still they bought them, and paraded them about. Simon looked at these watches for a long time, but did not buy. The old Jew had divers goods in his shop, and amongst others a case of oranges. Simon had tasted oranges on his journeys; he bought one and took it with him. He meant to go up on a hill, from where he could see the sea, and suck it there.

As he walked on, and had got to the outskirts of the place,

he saw a little girl in a blue frock, standing at the other side of a fence and looking at him. She was thirteen or fourteen years old, as slim as an eel, but with a round, clear, freckled face, and a pair of long plaits. The two looked at one another.

"Who are you looking out for?" Simon asked, to say something. The girl's face broke into a ecstatic, presumptuous smile. "For the man I am going to marry, of course," she said. Something in her countenance made the boy confident and happy; he grinned a little at her. "That will perhaps be me," he said. "Ha, ha," said the girl, "he is a few years older than you, I can tell you." "Why," said Simon, "you are not grown up yourself." The little girl shook her head solemnly. "Nay," she said, "but when I grow up I will be exceedingly beautiful, and wear brown shoes with heels, and a hat." "Will you have an orange?" asked Simon, who could give her none of the things she had named. She looked at the orange and at him. "They are very good to eat," said he. "Why do you not eat it yourself then?" she asked. "I have eaten so many already," said he, "when I was in Athens. Here I had to pay a mark for it." "What is your name?" asked she. "My name is Simon," said he. "What is yours?" "Nora," said the girl. "What do you want for your orange now, Simon?"

When he heard his name in her mouth Simon grew bold. "Will you give me a kiss for the orange?" he asked. Nora looked at him gravely for a moment. "Yes," she said, "I should not mind giving you a kiss." He grew as warm as if he had been running quickly. When she stretched out her hand for the orange he took hold of it. At that moment somebody in the house called out for her. "That is my father," said she, and tried to give him back the orange, but he would not take it. "Then come again tomorrow," she said quickly, "then I will give you a kiss." At that she slipped off. He stood and looked after her, and a little later went back to his ship.

Simon was not in the habit of making plans for the future, and now he did not know whether he would be going back to her or not.

The following evening he had to stay aboard, as the other sailors were going ashore, and he did not mind that either. He meant to sit on the deck with the ship's dog, Balthasar, and to practise upon a concertina that he had purchased some time ago. The pale evening was all round him, the sky was faintly roseate, the sea was quite calm, like milk-and-water, only in the wake of the boats going inshore it broke into streaks of vivid indigo. Simon sat and played; after a while his own music began to speak to him so strongly that he stopped, got up and looked upwards. Then he saw that the full moon was sitting high on the sky.

The sky was so light that she hardly seemed needed there; it was as if she had turned up by a caprice of her own. She was round, demure and presumptuous. At that he knew that he must go ashore, whatever it was to cost him. But he did not know how to get away, since the others had taken the yawl with them. He stood on the deck for a long time, a small lonely figure of a sailor-boy on a boat, when he caught sight of a yawl coming in from a ship farther out, and hailed her. He found that it was the Russian crew from a boat named *Anna*, going ashore. When he could make himself understood to them, they took him with them; they first asked him for money for his fare, then, laughing, gave it back to him. He thought: "These people will be believing that I am going in to town, wenching." And then he felt, with some pride, that they were right, although at the same time they were infinitely wrong, and knew nothing about anything.

When they came ashore they invited him to come in and drink in their company, and he would not refuse, because they had helped him. One of the Russians was a giant, as big as a bear; he told Simon that his name was Ivan. He got drunk at once, and then fell upon the boy with a bear-like affection, pawed him, smiled and laughed into his face, made him a present of a gold watch-chain, and kissed him on both cheeks. At that Simon reflected that he also ought to give Nora a present when they met again, and as soon as he could

get away from the Russians he walked up to a booth that he knew of, and bought a small blue silk handkerchief, the same colour as her eyes.

It was Saturday evening, and there were many people amongst the houses; they came in long rows, some of them singing, all keen to have some fun that night. Simon, in the midst of this rich, bawling life under the clear moon, felt his head light with the flight from the ship and the strong drinks. He crammed the handkerchief in his pocket; it was silk, which he had never touched before, a present for his girl.

He could not remember the path up to Nora's house, lost his way, and came back to where he had started. Then he grew deadly afraid that he should be too late, and began to run. In a small passage between two wooden huts he ran straight into a big man, and found that it was Ivan once more. The Russian folded his arms round him and held him. "Good! Good!" he cried in high glee, "I have found you, my little chicken. I have looked for you everywhere, and poor Ivan has wept because he lost his friend." "Let me go, Ivan," cried Simon. "Oho," said Ivan, "I shall go with you and get you what you want. My heart and my money are all yours, all yours; I have been seventeen years old myself, a little lamb of God, and I want to be so again tonight." "Let me go," cried Simon, "I am in a hurry." Ivan held him so that it hurt, and patted him with his other hand. "I feel it, I feel it," he said. "Now trust to me, my little friend. Nothing shall part you and me. I hear the others coming; we will have such a night together as you will remember when you are an old grandpapa."

Suddenly he crushed the boy to him, like a bear that carries off a sheep. The odious sensation of male bodily warmth and the bulk of a man close to him made the lean boy mad. He thought of Nora waiting, like a slender ship in the dim air, and of himself, here, in the hot embrace of a hairy animal. He struck Ivan with all his might. "I shall kill you, Ivan," he cried out, "if you do not let me go." "Oh, you will

be thankful to me later on," said Ivan, and began to sing. Simon fumbled in his pocket for his knife, and got it opened. He could not lift his hand, but he drove the knife, furiously, in under the big man's arm. Almost immediately he felt the blood spouting out, and running down in his sleeve. Ivan stopped short in the song, let go his hold of the boy and gave two long deep grunts. The next second he tumbled down on his knees. "Poor Ivan, poor Ivan," he groaned. He fell straight on his face. At that moment Simon heard the other sailors coming along, singing, in the by-street.

He stood still for a minute, wiped his knife, and watched the blood spread into a dark pool underneath the big body. Then he ran. As he stopped for a second to choose his way, he heard the sailors behind him scream out over their dead comrade. He thought: "I must get down to the sea, where I can wash my hand." But at the same time he ran the other way. After a little while he found himself on the path that he had walked on the day before, and it seemed as familiar to him, as if he had walked it many hundred times in his life.

He slackened his pace to look round, and suddenly saw Nora standing on the other side of the fence; she was quite close to him when he caught sight of her in the moonlight. Wavering and out of breath he sank down on his knees. For a moment he could not speak. The little girl looked down at him. "Good evening, Simon," she said in her small coy voice. "I have waited for you a long time," and after a moment she added: "I have eaten your orange."

"Oh, Nora," cried the boy. "I have killed a man." She stared at him, but did not move. "Why did you kill a man?" she asked after a moment. "To get here," said Simon. "Because he tried to stop me. But he was my friend." Slowly he got on to his feet. "He loved me!" the boy cried out, and at that burst into tears. "Yes," said she slowly and thoughtfully. "Yes, because you must be here in time." "Can you hide me?" he asked. "For they are after me." "Nay," said Nora, "I cannot hide you. For my father is the parson here at Bodø, and

he would be sure to hand you over to them, if he knew that you had killed a man." "Then," said Simon, "give me something to wipe my hands on." "What is the matter with your hands?" she asked, and took a little step forward. He stretched out his hands to her. "Is that your own blood?" she asked. "No," said he, "it is his." She took the step back again. "Do you hate me now?" he asked. "No, I do not hate you," said she. "But do put your hands at your back."

As he did so she came up close to him, at the other side of the fence, and clasped her arms round his neck. She pressed her young body to his, and kissed him tenderly. He felt her face, cool as the moonlight, upon his own, and when she released him, his head swam, and he did not know if the kiss had lasted a second or an hour. Nora stood up straight, her eyes wide open. "Now," she said slowly and proudly, "I promise you that I will never marry anybody, as long as I live." The boy kept standing with his hands on his back, as if she had tied them there. "And now," she said, "you must run, for they are coming." They looked at one another. "Do not forget Nora," said she. He turned and ran.

He leapt over a fence, and when he was down amongst the houses he walked. He did not know at all where to go. As he came to a house, from where music and noise streamed out, he slowly went through the door. The room was full of people; they were dancing in here. A lamp hung from the ceiling, and shone down on them; the air was thick and brown with the dust rising from the floor. There were some women in the room, but many of the men danced with each other, and gravely or laughingly stamped the floor. A moment after Simon had come in the crowd withdrew to the walls to clear the floor for two sailors, who were showing a dance from their own country.

Simon thought: "Now, very soon, the men from the boat will come round to look for their comrade's murderer, and from my hands they will know that I have done it." These five minutes during which he stood by the wall of the danc-

ing-room, in the midst of the gay, sweating dancers, were of great significance to the boy. He himself felt it, as if during this time he grew up, and became like other people. He did not entreat his destiny, nor complain. Here he was, he had killed a man, and had kissed a girl. He did not demand any more from life, nor did life now demand more from him. He was Simon, a man like the men round him, and going to die, as all men are going to die.

He only became aware of what was going on outside him, when he saw that a woman had come in, and was standing in the midst of the cleared floor, looking round her. She was a short, broad old woman, in the clothes of the Lapps, and she took her stand with such majesty and fierceness as if she owned the whole place. It was obvious that most of the people knew her, and were a little afraid of her, although a few laughed; the din of the dancing-room stopped when she spoke.

"Where is my son?" she asked in a high shrill voice, like a bird's. The next moment her eyes fell on Simon himself, and she steered through the crowd, which opened up before her, stretched out her old skinny, dark hand, and took him by the elbow. "Come home with me now," she said. "You need not dance here tonight. You may be dancing a high enough dance soon."

Simon drew back, for he thought that she was drunk. But as she looked him straight in the face with her yellow eyes, it seemed to him that he had met her before, and that he might do well in listening to her. The old woman pulled him with her across the floor, and he followed her without a word. "Do not birch your boy too badly, Sunniva," one of the men in the room cried to her. "He has done no harm, he only wanted to look at the dance."

At the same moment as they came out through the door, there was an alarm in the street, a flock of people came running down it, and one of them, as he turned into the house,



knocked against Simon, looked at him and the old woman, and ran on.

While the two walked along the street, the old woman lifted up her skirt, and put the hem of it into the boy's hand. "Wipe your hand on my skirt," she said. They had not gone far before they came to a small wooden house, and stopped; the door to it was so low that they must bend to get through it. As the Lapp-woman went in before Simon, still holding on to his arm, the boy looked up for a moment. The night had grown misty; there was a wide ring round the moon.

The old woman's room was narrow and dark, with but one small window to it; a lantern stood on the floor and lighted it up dimly. It was all filled with reindeer skins and wolf skins, and with reindeer horn, such as the Lapps use to make their carved buttons and knife-handles, and the air in here was rank and stifling. As soon as they were in, the woman turned to Simon, took hold of his head, and with her crooked fingers parted his hair and combed it down in Lapp fashion. She clapped a Lapp cap on him and stood back to glance at him. "Sit down on my stool, now," she said. "But first take out your knife." She was so commanding in voice and manner that the boy could not but choose to do as she told him; he sat down on the stool, and he could not take his eyes off her face, which was flat and brown, and as if smeared with dirt in its net of fine wrinkles. As he sat there he heard many people come along outside, and stop by the house; then someone knocked at the door, waited a moment and knocked again. The old woman stood and listened, as still as a mouse.

"Nay," said the boy and got up. "This is no good, for it is me that they are after. It will be better for you to let me go out to them." "Give me your knife," said she. When he handed it to her, she stuck it straight into her thumb, so that the blood spouted out, and she let it drip all over her skirt. "Come in, then," she cried.

The door opened, and two of the Russian sailors came and stood in the opening; there were more people outside. "Has anybody come in here?" they asked. "We are after a man who has killed our mate, but he has run away from us. Have you seen or heard anybody this way?" The old Lapp-woman turned upon them, and her eye shone like gold in the lamp-light. "Have I seen or heard anyone?" she cried, "I have heard you shriek murder all over the town. You frightened me, and my poor silly boy there, so that I cut my thumb as I was ripping the skin-rug that I sew. The boy is too scared to help me, and the rug is all ruined. I shall make you pay me for that. If you are looking for a murderer, come in and search my house for me, and I shall know you when we meet again." She was so furious that she danced where she stood, and jerked her head like an angry bird of prey.

The Russian came in, looked round the room, and at her and her bloodstained hand and skirt. "Do not put a curse on us now, Sunniva," he said timidly. "We know that you can do many things when you like. Here is a mark to pay you for the blood you have spilled." She stretched out her hand, and he placed a piece of money in it. She spat on it. "Then go, and there shall be no bad blood between us," said Sunniva, and shut the door after them. She stuck her thumb in her mouth, and chuckled a little.

The boy got up from his stool, stood straight up before her and stared into her face. He felt as if he were swaying high up in the air, with but a small hold. "Why have you helped me?" he asked her. "Do you not know?" she answered. "Have you not recognised me yet? But you will remember the peregrine falcon which was caught in the tackle-yarn of your boat, the *Charlotte*, as she sailed in the Mediterranean. That day you climbed up by the shrouds of the top-gallantmast to help her out, in a stiff wind, and with a high sea. That falcon was me. We Lapps often fly in such a manner, to see the world. When I first met you I was on my way to Africa, to see my youngest sister and her children.

She is a falcon too, when she chooses. By that time she was living at Takaunga, within an old ruined tower, which down there they call a minaret." She swathed a corner of her skirt round her thumb, and bit at it. "We do not forget," she said. "I hacked your thumb, when you took hold of me; it is only fair that I should cut my thumb for you tonight."

She came close to him, and gently rubbed her two brown, claw-like fingers against his forehead. "So you are a boy," she said, "who will kill a man rather than be late to meet your sweetheart? We hold together, the females of this earth. I shall mark your forehead now, so that the girls will know of that, when they look at you, and they will like you for it." She played with the boy's hair, and twisted it round her finger.

"Listen now, my little bird," said she. "My great grandson's brother-in-law is lying with his boat by the landing-place at this moment; he is to take a consignment of skins out to a Danish boat. He will bring you back to your boat, in time, before your mate comes. The *Hebe* is sailing tomorrow morning, is it not so? But when you are aboard, give him back my cap for me." She took up his knife, wiped it in her skirt and handed it to him. "Here is your knife," she said. "You will stick it into no more men; you will not need to, for from now you will sail the seas like a faithful seaman. We have enough trouble with our sons as it is."

The bewildered boy began to stammer his thanks to her. "Wait," said she, "I shall make you a cup of coffee, to bring back your wits, while I wash your jacket." She went and rattled an old copper kettle upon the fireplace. After a while she handed him a hot, strong, black drink in a cup without a handle to it. "You have drunk with Sunniva now," she said; "you have drunk down a little wisdom, so that in the future all your thoughts shall not fall like raindrops into the salt sea."

When he had finished and set down the cup, she led him to the door and opened it for him. He was surprised to see

that it was almost clear morning. The house was so high up that the boy could see the sea from it, and a milky mist about it. He gave her his hand to say good-bye.

She stared into his face. "We do not forget," she said. "And you, you knocked me on the head there, high up in the mast. I shall give you that blow back." With that she smacked him on the ear as hard as she could, so that his head swam. "Now we are quits," she said, gave him a great, mischievous, shining glance, and a little push down the doorstep, and nodded to him.

In this way the sailor-boy got back to his ship, which was to sail the next morning, and lived to tell the story.

# *An Introduction to Eric*

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ELLIS ST. JOSEPH

NOW that the murder was a thing accomplished, Eric felt suddenly relieved and surfeited. Miss Prung, the governess, hung from a rope in the nursery where Eric had hanged her; and no one, he felt sure, was as yet aware of the killing except Miss Prung and himself. The lady had been fully cognizant of his proceedings for a good half hour, or, to be exact, from the instant when Eric had slipped the rope over her head and encompassed the thin neck in its noose, until that later and even more ecstatic moment, when, with a shiver of pain and ultimate horror, her bulging eyes had opened upon eternity. Perhaps it was more than thirty minutes, but it seemed less, his interest had so intensified the time; he had just stood there, thrillingly near her kicking feet, wringing his fingers with a nervous delight, and watched the contortions of her changing face: the expression of surprise, and anger; the screw of pain; the grimace of twitching terror, and the final mask of death. It seemed that he had hanged five Miss Prungs, not one; and he was glad, terribly glad, that he had chosen her to be his—yes, he must qualify the word—his *first* victim.

His idea, his great idea, had dawned very suddenly upon him, so late as yesterday, when, in the company of some friends, he had attended a matinée performance of marionettes. By a freakish chance of fate, the little theater was given that day to a presentation of "The Tragedy of Mr. Punch." The play was lovely, Eric thought, and the puppets

excellent; practiced fingers manipulated the invisible wires and coaxed them into oblivion. The mechanical actors moved and spoke like living souls, expired with the real anguish of dying men; nothing was wanting to the illusion. Eric experienced an almost childish delight in the company of so many delighted children and he followed the story with a breathless interest. Mr. Punch was a terrible drunkard: by his frightful appearance one might have foretold his doom. He beat Toby, his faithful dog, and killed him; he beat Judy, his wife, to death; and when the Hangman came to hang him, he hanged the Hangman. It was a marvellous show. At its conclusion, as the gaudy curtain fell upon the gory scene, Eric stood up and applauded and, with all the little children who surrounded him, he clapped and called for more.

He remembered this very clearly now, every wooden gesture and each fluting voice, but the precise moment of his inspiration and his subsequent decision, these seemed echoes of a distant epoch and quite beyond recall. Perhaps their inception antedated the performance, perhaps they had been born in him and had motivated his every action from birth, culminating in his desire to see "The Tragedy of Mr. Punch"; if so, then yesterday's playlet was only a stimulus to his unconscious yearning, a sharp prod to his sleeping mind. At all events, his long walk home had been a deeply meditative one, and the sight of so many murders, rendered real by his sympathetic imagination, had excited rather than appeased his thirst for . . . But the thing must be nameless lest the horror become familiar and lose some particle of its awfulness.

Murder it would be when committed, but in the formless state of his present mind it remained an apparition, the faceless ghost of a departed twilight. He was vaguely disturbed by the haunting persistency of a thought, the thought that he had thought all this before, in every detail, and was reliving some darkly-ancient incident, half-remembered, from his *own* past. Like an artist who has blocked in the composition

on a grateful canvas, there remained nothing for Eric but the light sketch of his sitter's portrait.

What an immense problem to solve in the span of one single night! How close he came to the heart of darkness, in the stormy course of his thought, Eric knew; there were times when he was lost, drowned with his crew of victims, or engulfed in the cavernous maw of a hideous monster. But as these visions fast faded and apprehension left him, a feeling of power came upon Eric, a bigness that swelled him beyond the limiting confines of his bed and home: he continued to grow and expand until his enormous figure loomed over the city, casting an invisible shadow in the night, and all the millions of little people, observed through the boxlike windows of their apartment houses, were seen as one gigantic puppet show.

Eric suddenly discovered that he was like God and, like God, he moved in a cloak of darkness. The very multiplicity of his choice, the power to murder any one of a million men and women, his tenable position to take life or permit it—this confirmed his resolution and filled him with a thrilling importance. He turned and tossed in his solitude, longed for light and the moment when he might point a random finger at some unsuspecting stranger; he rebelled at his impotence of the moment and cursed the calm living sleep which pervaded the city. What is sleep but a rehearsal of death? And as Eric remembered this, his little lips smiled queerly, somewhat crookedly, and almost tenderly, as if pleased by this elaborate preparation for the slaughter, and soon after he fell into the deep untroubled slumber of a child.

How long he had slept, Eric did not know; but when he awoke, it was still dark, still night, and his first conscious thought was the last on which he had closed his eyes. To point a random finger at some unsuspecting stranger—no, that made light of the killing, rendered it a passing incident; it was too like culling flowers in a strange field at midnight. He would realize the full might of his act only if he recog-

nized the vital force of the life thus taken, its frightening importance, and confront it in the extreme moment with his own superiority. In giving a face to this nameless body he must draw from real life; and with the name on his little lips, Eric conceived the deed as already done.

Who lived in his house?

First, there was his old father, a fat bloated man with a hard mole on one nostril and a thick bristling beard that grew over his soft mouth and hurt Eric's hairless cheek as the old man kissed him good-night. He had a bald skull with a circular fringe of black hair which grew long and thin and was plastered over the shining baldness. His paunch—the way it was encased in large baggy trousers—made Eric slightly ill; but, above all, he hated the manner in which the old man removed his spectacles as he sat down to the dinner table. He wiped them with a clean napkin, adjusted them carefully upon his nose, and then peered *over* them at the collation of bowls and dishes of food before him.

"The happiest days of our lives," his father was fond of saying, "are the days of our childhood. I shall never forget . . ." And as he went on interminably, Eric clenched his fists until the knuckles showed in white spots, and, filled with an agony of resentment, was forced to sit there silent. How he longed to kill this self-righteous man who had forgotten even that he no longer remembered, and mouthed such meaningless words! And do you remember, you stupid old man, the nights of your childhood, the long feverish nights, as interminable as one of your speeches, and meaningless with unknown forms and half-sensed horror? Do you remember those shapes which glided past your bed, taking on color in the darkness, and kissed your cold lips with a hideous affection? What of those ominous words that danced before your eyes and glowed with an unruly fire? Have you never felt so bitter that the thought of death was sweet?

But his father spoke on, scarcely aware of Eric's frozen smile and desperate eyes, spoke on; he discussed politics,



and business, and economics, and prison reform, and better wages for the people. His conversation had become a dull monologue that at times rocked hysterically upon the brink of oratory. . . . Once Eric tore himself away from the table, knocking down his chair, and rushed precipitantly into the drawing-room.

This was his father's forum, a cold stilted room, furnished with his father's easy chair and artificial flowers enclosed in a glass globe which belonged to his father's mother, and an upright piano that had come down through generations of his father's people; here, shaking with a nervous anxiety, he thrust his face into the dim recesses of a high cheval mirror. It was with a feeling of *now* or *never*, and a desire to know the truth at all costs, that he searched the image of his reflection, the thin peaked nose, the white transparency of his skin, the formless little lips, and burning eyes—all this, for one single mark or resemblance which might establish an indisputable consanguinity with his father. Just as Miss Prung's entrance into the room was announced by the swishing of taffeta skirts on the threshold, Eric noticed, or thought he saw, the beginning of a little hard mole on one nostril, and he fainted.

It would be pleasant if the old man were suddenly to disappear, or to die in natural order; but to kill him, to come into physical contact with him, was odious to Eric, and he dismissed the idea with a quick repulsion. No, not his father, better still, Tant'Hélène.

That was his stepmother, a French woman with unnatural blond hair. She was small and plump, with large nervous eyes, a wide nose, and rubbery lips; powder and rouge coated her swarthy complexion, and a thick line of crayon accentuated the heavy black brows which formed a continuous line across her low forehead. Her many gestures were abrupt and startling, her hands were the largest that Eric had ever seen; her tightly laced corset was in constant evidence beneath the clinging silk, usually black, which she wore to enhance her

yellow hair. She was openly and proudly addicted to the use of perfumes: bottles of narcissus, violet, lilac, heliotrope, and lily-of-the-valley, all in bottles, smothered her dressing table, and from day to day, flooded the house with their heavy odor.

Eric disliked her intensely. Formerly he remembered his own mother, a little thin anæmic woman; but since the advent of Tant'Hélène this memory was murdered, and the two women had merged into one. There had been a time when the dead woman appeared to him in apparitions of sudden and startling violence, apparelled in the livid beauty of a medieval saint—appeared to him with the astounding clarity of a stained-glass window illuminated by lightning at night. Then the dark years seemed to roll from under him, a long line of seasons called in military count, and he remembered; he remembered that his mother's name was Mary, and that he had been an infant in her arms. But these marvellous visions had long since ceased, were superseded by an unscrupulous reality; now it was his stepmother, Tant'Hélène in carpet slippers and a bathrobe, who trudged through his little room silently with red rubber gloves on her enormous hands.

Although she filled him with horror and her kisses suffocated him, Eric was hopelessly fascinated by the woman, so much so, that the very name of Tant'Hélène had a terrible beauty of its own. He was irresistibly compelled to follow her from room to room throughout the house, listening to her unending conversations over the telephone, watching as she rouged her lips like some pouting mannequin in a hand mirror—and all the time he looked with a grave uncritical countenance. His continual presence, the noiseless steps of his dogged pursuit, his silent admission of a conscious wrongdoing, these things annoyed and irritated, even drove her volatile temper to distraction. Time after time she sent him away, back to Miss Prung and the nursery; but always, when least expected and hardly heard, sometimes standing on the

threshold hesitantly, often just behind her as she walked, he was there. He frightened her.

"Why do you always follow me?" she screamed in thick guttural tones. "What do you hope to find?" "I *hate* silent children!"

Late one afternoon in winter, when the street was filled with a bluish twilight and a blanket of white snow covered the gutter, when long shadows fell from the dark windows and drowned the rooms in an obscure gloom, Eric stole into his stepmother's bedroom and began to ransack the drawers of her bureau. Tant'Hélène, wrapped in furs, had long since departed for tea; his old father would not come for an hour from business; Miss Prung was asleep in the nursery. What he was after Eric did not know; he knew only that the empty dark room drew him with an irresistible force. As he opened the door a wave of cold air bathed his face and made myriads of little goose-pimples rise on his arms and legs and the nape of his thin neck. He stood in the forbidden doorway and listened.

Downstairs in the drawing-room an old German clock, the last gift of his father's dead sister, chimed five. Five times it chimed with an unbearable interval between each chime, and each chime seemed to put a periodic end to time.

Then he was ransacking the bureau, opening drawer after drawer, digging his lean fingers into piles of her undergarments, unearthing sachets of lavender and old rose, discovering her elastic garters, pink ribbons, embroidered corset covers, her newly washed brassières, shields for her arm pits—he was drawn by an insatiable curiosity; *there* were the awful rubber-red gloves, there in the miscellaneous box of photographs, pins, cigarettes, and fallen hair. And *here* her creams, her ointments and unguents, her salves, bath salts, cleansing fluid, etc. . . . He was holding a pair of black-silk opera hose, the longest stockings he ever had seen, holding them up to the light, the better to see and feel their soft mesh, when he heard a smothered cry, and in the dark mirror

before him saw a reflection of Tant'Hélène. She looked ghastly. Eric felt the opera hose run through his fingers like water, and the life in him seemed to flow and fall with them. Her sealskin was wet, her face was green, her mouth was open wide and looked all black inside. For one fleeting minute there was a deafening silence, during which each gazed at the other's reflection and wished to wake from this strange dream into reality.

Suddenly coming to life, Tant'Hélène ran across the room, roughly clutched Eric's shoulder and turned him around: from then on, Eric saw nothing but her eyes, two wheels of dirty fire, and heard her screaming voice:

"You thief! Thief! What are you doing in my room? *Mon dieu*, I have you now! Caught in the act! Now you can't lie to me, you can't make such innocent eyes at me; I know you now! If you were my child I should kill you! But no, no, no; not mine, *his*! His, you robber; do you hear me? *His*!"

As she recoiled to strike him she caught the expression in his eyes, and her arm went paralyzed. In one glance she encompassed the havoc he had wrought, her undergarments scattered over the red rug, the long black hose in a pile at his feet, the intimate details of her life exposed and bare—she saw this, and she saw the expression in his eyes, and she lost her voice and blushed to the roots of her hair.

"*Mère de dieu! Mère de dieu!*"

Eric stood erect. Tant'Hélène backed away from him in real horror, mumbling to herself as she went, "You are no child, you are an old man. . . . *You're a horrible old man!*" She fled from the room. I might have killed her then when she turned her back and fled; not when I saw that awful reflection in the mirror, not when she stood before me, but when she turned her plump back and fled. It would have been easy then; then I should have enjoyed it, but now, now it's too late. Then she knew me for what I am, and that gave me courage; the sight of her flat back gave me courage—courage? I can murder anyone I choose! . . . But not Tant'-

Hélène, I mustn't murder her. I don't dare to—not because I can't, or don't want to—but because of her *hands!*

So ran his thoughts as he lay in bed, meditating and pre-meditating, and now, more than ever, bent upon murder. The old man was a shabby phantom, hungry for death, and Eric his invisible host; but he dismissed him in the manner of a dainty lady who, for fear of soiling the tip of her glove in a beggar's palm, avoids his eloquent eye. Tant'Hélène was likewise tabu, the untouchable, the naked Life-in-Death who wins her throw with Death. Unable to accept his two intended victims by reason of his own weakness, he determined upon a third, someone who would bear the brunt of their crimes, his revenge, and expiate in their place.

Who else lived in the house?

There remained but one logical alternative, so inevitable that the name had been in Eric's mind long before any consideration of the others; he knew this, and in recognizing his subconscious desire achieved a complete fulfillment. It made Eric so happy that, before he fell into a dreamless sleep, he decided upon the name and the manner of the deed; so deeply happy that, when awakened the following morning by Miss Prung, the governess, he threw his arms around her thin neck and kissed her stupid face.

This was three hours before he hanged her, and the sun was still shining, and his parents were downstairs eating soft-boiled eggs at breakfast, and already little children were skipping rope in the street, and playing Jack-the-Ripper, and Jack-be-nimble, Jack-be-quick, Jack-jump-over-the-candle-stick.

"Good morning, my dear!" said Miss Prung, and added cheerfully, "Such a lovely bright sunny morning! It's time to be up and doing!"

Her voice was naturally so wan and undecisive, so pathetically weak, that her intended bright remarks, said with sadly-smiling lips and heavy-lidded eyes (enormous eyes, really, which frightened you with their own timidity)

sounded absurd and were screamingly funny to Eric. Her soft loose hands fluttered nervously all about her through the air like two large white moths. Evidently she had intended to draw her thin brown hair into a bun at the back of her neck, but it escaped on the way in innumerable wisps which she constantly smoothed and sought to replace. Miss Prung, with a tendency to chicken-breastedness, thin and undeveloped, over forty, suggested an anxious child about to recite in assembly.

As he sat up and studied her, Eric looked like a little lecherous old man being served in bed by a frightened young girl.

He bathed and dressed, under Miss Prung's embarrassed supervision; and then, with an air of coming into her own, she led him into the old nursery which now served as school-room. For this purpose it was bare and whitewashed, furnished with a large chair, a small chair, a large desk, and a small desk, all in oak, a broad work table, likewise in oak, and, dispossessed from his father's drawing-room, a stuffed owl with glassy eyes, buried in the dim recesses of a dust-catcher. Pictures of our dead Presidents lined the walls; unhealthy geraniums in terra-cotta pots cluttered the triple window sill; in one corner was an untidy heap of toys piled one on the other. From the center of the ceiling hung a stiff chandelier, one end firmly planted in the plaster, the other twisted like two clutching arms, upwards and downwards, into a gas candle and electric bulb. In a black bowl on the work table a dying narcissus sent its roots, like tentacles of white rubber, into the wet pebbles; an opened bud, folded in coarse green shoots, was already decayed, yellow, and crisp.

Miss Prung sat down on the large chair, with her back to the window; facing her, Eric sat down in the small chair. The governess opened a large book, and as she scanned the page intently, Eric's attention wandered from the concen-

trated expression upon her sad childish face to a consideration of the chandelier which hung above them and then to the indiscriminate pile of toys in one corner. Thin as he was, he sat with all the enormous poise of obesity; the monstrous nature of his intentions gave him a bigness and bulk which dwarfed the schoolroom. Back and forth, from the stiff chandelier to the pile of toys, his attention swung until, suddenly looking up, Miss Prung commanded it.

"We shall begin with geography," announced Miss Prung tentatively. Eric nodded in the affirmative.

"What is the largest country in South America?" asked Miss Prung.

"*Brazil*," said Eric.

"What is the next largest country?" she inquired.

"*Argentine*."

"What is the capital of Peru?"

"*Lima*."

"By whom was it settled?"

"*The Spanish*."

And so on. If some stranger with an ear to the wall had listened to their voices in the next room, he would have thought the woman actually ignorant and sincere in her questions, he would have thought the boy most anxious to inform his curious companion; and this same stranger might have wondered why, if he had the acute penetration, why those answers sounded like the soft explosions of a string of Chinese firecrackers. There was a timed regularity about them, the deliberate precision of a man whose every word has its place in a definite pattern. The study of geography was concluded, and a review of history begun; then they advanced with rapid stride through the simple maze of spelling, grammar, and arithmetic. Finally they were finished.

Miss Prung sat back in the large chair, sighed deeply, and closed her tired eyes. Eric was tense, excited, alert; his work

commenced with the conclusion of her labors. When she opened her eyes at last it was to discover that Eric, perched on the edge of his stool, was intently scrutinizing her.

"We will now have recreation," Miss Prung announced with an accustomed vagueness. Her face was so inadequate and sad as she said these words that Eric with difficulty controlled his countenance. As if he were in the theater, attending the performance of a terror play, the most meaningless humors gave rise and excuse to a delirious laughter. But he was silent, expectant, waiting.

"Tell me what you did yesterday afternoon," asked Miss Prung.

Eric was waiting for this.

"Where did you go, my dear?"

*"I went to the puppet show,"* said Eric.

Again he experienced that strange feeling that this conversation, all this, had happened before, a long time ago.

"And tell me, what did you see?" queried Miss Prung.

"The Tragedy of Mr. Punch," said Eric. It seemed as if they spoke by rote, as though each had learned his given part, and in performance now recited their lines from memory. The dramatic title awoke a show of amazement in Miss Prung's stupid kind face; she was startled, but having been startled before, she quickly concealed it. She knew that she was not very clever, even suspected that she was rather dull, and it was sad to consider this fact; moreover, she abhorred deception and strove for honesty; but, in relations with her pupil, through consideration for his welfare, she deemed it wise, much wiser, to disguise and hide her own inadequacy. Miss Prung hoped that for what she lacked in intelligence and real erudition she might substitute in real companionship; and the past, with its long series of little charges, had confirmed her modest intentions and given her reason to hope.

"When I was a little girl," Miss Prung was accustomed to say, "I never played with the other children." And some-



times, with more truth perhaps, and exactitude, she added, "They never played with me." There was a peculiar catch in her normal voice, a habit of speech rather than an expression of grief, which weighted these remarks with an unintentional pathos that was quite beyond her comprehension. Now, though scarcely more than a girl, she was a governess of forty; and Miss Prung liked to believe in her happier moments that she played with little children, that she was one of them, and that they liked to play with her. It was the unswerving ambition of her life to become a child (before she was too old to enjoy it, of course), and though the years hung all about her like dried winter leaves to an oak, Miss Prung thought she had achieved fulfillment. For this reason she anticipated the hour of recreation and play, took an active part in it, and tried to enter into the spirit of things.

Eric watched her.

Avoiding a repetition of the tragic title, "Can you tell me the story?" Miss Prung asked hastily.

"*He's a drunkard,*" said Eric.

"And what happens to him, my dear?" she thought it wise to ask, that she might possibly point out some obvious moral.

"*He beats his dog and kills him.*"

"Yes, yes," she pursued quickly, "but what happens to him? Mr. Punch?" She began to think that it might have been wiser if Eric had remained at home. At best, the theater is not a proper place for little children. Miss Prung decided that in the future she would attend and censor any production which the boy expressed a desire to see.

"*He beats his wife, Judy, to death.*"

"How awful! And then, surely, something happens to him? Mr. Punch is punished?" How she wished that she were better acquainted with that particular history! She thought that she now knew the worst: Eric should not have seen the play. He was an impressionable child; one never knows what horrible ideas such children may receive from plays, even puppet plays. "Tell me what happens to him!" she cried.

*"He hangs the Hangman."*

This went utterly beyond Miss Prung's feeble and excited mentality. She wanted to understand this, felt it her duty, and suddenly sensed an inexplicable importance in it. Almost frightened, she cried out, "I don't understand! Explain what you mean, Eric!"

Eric was waiting for this.

He slowly stood up, walked across the room, and began to search in the pile of toys. Dismayed, Miss Prung followed his movements with an uneasy apprehension; if this was some game she was determined to appreciate, to take part in it. Eric uncovered a long measure of rope, formerly utilized for street exercise, and long since discarded amongst his other useless odds and ends. Now Miss Prung was watching, completely fascinated, as he drew up his little chair to the center of the room, to that spot immediately under the chandelier.

*"I'll show you."*

So it was to be a game. Anything to take his mind away from that horrid recital of cruelty and murder! She corrected herself quickly—as the chair, the rope, and his lingering gaze upon the chandelier formed a concrete and ineradicable pattern in her mind—but even so, she would permit anything that she might better understand, better grasp the problem, that she might point a moral period to the child's awful tale. This was her thought as Eric showed her what to do, how to stand, and what was next expected of her. A sensation of terror, delicious in its daring, and yet tempered by a consciousness of fun and mimicry, completely overcame her scruples; as the little boy went unerringly about his task, Miss Prung abandoned herself to a full enjoyment of her precarious situation. "What next?" she cried. "What shall I do next?" Eric demonstrated. "Oh! Oh!" she screamed in shrill delight, like an infant whose naked toe meets its first cold wave. By this time, thoroughly sub-

merged in the spirit of things, she had lost sight of her original objective.

For one fleeting instant she was aware of her fate. It may have been the expression in Eric's eyes that warned her; or it may have been possible that, perched so high, she felt the tip of a gigantic wing brush her stupidly smiling lips. However it was, she *knew*; and her mouth broke open with horror.

"Remember: I'm a marionette!" she shouted. "We're marionettes!"

Eric found himself smiling as he kicked the chair. He delivered a vicious kick at its rungs that sent it flying, from under her and away from him, across the room and into the wall. Into that kick he poured all the violent blood that surged in him and sought outlet; aimed at no one, it hit out indiscriminately, at Tant'Hélène and the old man, at himself and the fate that had formed him, at the calendar of bitter tears that marked his brief time.

Miss Prung hung from the rope, her chin held higher than usual; and her soft white hands fluttered all about her like large moths around an agitated flame. Miss Prung's legs worked as if she were pedaling a bicycle; Miss Prung's eyes were stung with terror and swelled enormously, seeing less and less as they strained to see more; Miss Prung's jaw, dislocated by the fall, gave her face in expression the exaggerated fear of a tragic mask. Her feet, encased in high-laced shoes, were not fourteen inches from the floor. Suddenly, the chandelier gave; it gave from the ceiling and fell in a shower of white plaster; it fell for a few inches and then, with an abrupt jerk, was brought up by the stout wires and tubing which lined it.

Eric backed away against the wall. His one disappointment was, that Miss Prung, as she hung there, seemed completely inhuman; there was no blood upon her blue taffeta, no loud voice to embody her agony; she merely hung, and

twisted, like a puppet that has finished its performance, and is hung from the shelf, still warm and trembling with mimic life.

Sometime later, as he closed the door softly behind him, Eric felt relieved and surfeited. The murder was a thing accomplished; and Miss Prung, the governess, turned and twisted in the nursery where Eric had hanged her. Then, suddenly, Eric became afraid, and he ran for the staircase; he floated down the steps like a man in a dream, and his shadow came up to meet him as it fell down the flight at his feet. Voices started and expanded in his ears, grew into conversation, and became real as he walked into the drawing-room.

He walked into the drawing-room slowly.

Tant'Hélène was entertaining a friend, two friends, perhaps three. The room was filled with the heavy odor of her perfume. In one corner, his father, dispossessed from his own chair by an audacious guest, peered over his trembling spectacles as he spoke, and with one finger felt the hard mole on the nostril of his ugly nose.

"Eric!" said his stepmother. "Eric, my dear," cried Tant'Hélène, lifting her guttural voice above the steady flow of her husband's words, "Eric, I want you to say hello to these ladies. They are my very dear friends. And this is Eric! I want to introduce you . . . only eight years old and so big! . . . My son, Eric!"

# *The Turn of the Tide*

---

C. S. FORESTER

WHAT always beats them in the end," said Dr. Matthews, "is how to dispose of the body. But, of course, you know that as well as I do."

"Yes," said Slade. He had, in fact, been devoting far more thought to what Dr. Matthews believed to be this accidental subject of conversation than Dr. Matthews could ever guess.

"As a matter of fact," went on Dr. Matthews, warming to the subject to which Slade had so tactfully led him, "it's a terribly knotty problem. It's so difficult, in fact, that I always wonder why anyone is fool enough to commit murder."

"All very well for you," thought Slade, but he did not allow his thoughts to alter his expression. "You smug, self-satisfied old ass! You don't know the sort of difficulties a man can be up against."

"I've often thought the same," he said.

"Yes," went on Dr. Matthews, "it's the body that does it, every time. To use poison calls for special facilities, which are good enough to hang you as soon as suspicion is roused. And that suspicion—well, of course, part of my job is to detect poisoning. I don't think anyone can get away with it, nowadays, even with the most dunderheaded general practitioner."

"I quite agree with you," said Slade. He had no intention of using poison.

"Well," went on Dr. Matthews, developing his logical

argument, "if you rule out poison, you rule out the chance of getting the body disposed of under the impression that the victim died a natural death. The only other way, if a man cares to stand the racket of having the body to give evidence against him, is to fake things to look like suicide. But you know, and I know, that it just can't be done. The mere fact of suicide calls for a close examination, and no one has ever been able to fix things so well as to get away with it. You're a lawyer. You've probably read a lot of reports of trials where the murderer has tried it on. And you know what's happened to them."

"Yes," said Slade.

He certainly had given a great deal of consideration to the matter. It was only after long thought that he had, finally, put aside the notion of disposing of young Spalding and concealing his guilt by a sham suicide.

"That brings us to where we started, then," said Dr. Matthews. "The only other thing left is to try and conceal the body. And that's more difficult still."

"Yes," said Slade. But he had a perfect plan for disposing of the body.

"A human body," said Dr. Matthews, "is a most difficult thing to get rid of. That chap Oscar Wilde, in that book of his—'Dorian Gray,' isn't it?—gets rid of one by the use of chemicals. Well, I'm a chemist as well as a doctor, and I wouldn't like the job."

"No?" said Slade, politely.

Dr. Matthews was not nearly as clever a man as himself, he thought.

"There's altogether too much of it," said Dr. Matthews. "It's heavy, and it's bulky, and it's bound to undergo corruption. Think of all those poor devils who've tried it. Bodies in trunks, and bodies in coal-cellars, and bodies in chicken-runs. You can't hide the thing, try as you will."

"Can't I? That's all you know," thought Slade, but aloud

he said: "You're quite right. I've never thought about it before."

"Of course, you haven't," agreed Dr. Matthews. "Sensible people don't, unless it's an incident of their profession, as in my case."

"And yet, you know," he went on, meditatively, "there's one decided advantage about getting rid of the body altogether. You're much safer, then. It's a point which ought to interest you, as a lawyer, more than me. It's rather an obscure point of law, but I fancy there are very definite rulings on it. You know what I'm referring to?"

"No, I don't," said Slade, genuinely puzzled.

"You can't have a trial for murder unless you can prove there's a victim," said Dr. Matthews. "There's got to be a corpus delicti, as you lawyers say in your horrible dog-Latin. A corpse, in other words, even if it's only a bit of one, like that which hanged Crippen. No corpse, no trial. I think that's good law, isn't it?"

"By Jove, you're right!" said Slade. "I wonder why that hadn't occurred to me before?"

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than he regretted having said them. He did his best to make his face immobile again; he was afraid lest his expression might have hinted at his pleasure in discovering another very reassuring factor in this problem of killing young Spalding. But Dr. Matthews had noticed nothing.

"Well, as I said, people only think about these things if they're incidental to their profession," he said. "And, all the same, it's only a theoretical piece of law. The entire destruction of a body is practically impossible. But, I suppose, if a man could achieve it, he would be all right. However strong the suspicion was against him, the police couldn't get him without a corpse. There might be a story in that, Slade, if you or I were writers."

"Yes," assented Slade, and laughed harshly.

There never would be any story about the killing of young Spalding, the insolent pup.

"Well," said Dr. Matthews, "we've had a pretty gruesome conversation, haven't we? And I seem to have done all the talking, somehow. That's the result, I suppose, Slade, of the very excellent dinner you gave me. I'd better push off now. Not that the weather is very inviting."

Nor was it. As Slade saw Dr. Matthews into his car, the rain was driving down in a real winter storm, and there was a bitter wind blowing.

"Shouldn't be surprised if this turned to snow, before morning," were Dr. Matthews's last words before he drove off.

Slade was glad it was such a tempestuous night. It meant that, more certainly than ever, there would be no one out in the lanes, no one out on the sands when he disposed of young Spalding's body.

Back in his drawing-room, Slade looked at the clock. There was still an hour to spare; he could spend it in making sure that his plans were all correct.

He looked up the tide tables. Yes, that was right enough. Spring tides. The lowest of low water on the sands. There was not so much luck about that; young Spalding came back on the midnight train every Wednesday night, and it was not surprising that, sooner or later, the Wednesday night would coincide with a spring tide. But it was lucky that this particular Wednesday night should be one of tempest: luckier still that low water should be at one-thirty, the best time for him.

He opened the drawing-room door and listened carefully. He could not hear a sound. Mrs. Dumbleton, his house-keeper, must have been in bed some time now. She was as deaf as a post, anyway, and would not hear his departure. Nor his return, when Spalding had been killed and disposed of.



The hands of the clock seemed to be moving very fast. He must make sure everything was correct. The plough chain and the other iron weights were already in the back seat of the car; he had put them there before old Matthews arrived to dine. He slipped on his overcoat.

From his desk, Slade took a curious little bit of apparatus: eighteen inches of strong cord, tied at each end to a six-inch length of wood so as to make a ring. He made a last close examination to see that the knots were quite firm, and then he put it in his pocket; as he did so, he ran through, in his mind, the words—he knew them by heart—of the passage in the book about the Thugs of India, describing the method of strangulation employed by them.

He could think quite coldly about all this. Young Spalding was a pestilent busybody. A word from him, now, could bring ruin upon Slade, could send him to prison, could have him struck off the rolls.

Slade thought of other defaulting solicitors he had heard of, even one or two with whom he had come into contact professionally. He remembered his brother-solicitors' remarks about them, pitying or contemptuous. He thought of having to beg his bread in the streets on his release from prison, of cold and misery and starvation. The shudder which shook him was succeeded by a hot wave of resentment. Never, never, would he endure it.

What right had young Spalding, who had barely been qualified two years, to condemn a grey-haired man twenty years his senior to such a fate? If nothing but death would stop him, then he deserved to die. He clenched his hand on the cord in his pocket.

A glance at the clock told him he had better be moving. He turned out the lights and tiptoed out of the house, shutting the door quietly. The bitter wind flung icy rain into his face, but he did not notice it.

He pushed the car out of the garage by hand, and, con-

trary to his wont, he locked the garage doors, as a precaution against the infinitesimal chance that, on a night like this, someone should notice that his car was out.

He drove cautiously down the road. Of course, there was not a soul about in a quiet place like this. The few street-lamps were already extinguished.

There were lights in the station as he drove over the bridge; they were awaiting there the arrival of the twelve-thirty train. Spalding would be on that. Every Wednesday he went over to his subsidiary office, sixty miles away. Slade turned into the lane a quarter of a mile beyond the station, and then reversed his car so that it pointed towards the road. He put out the sidelights, and settled himself to wait; his hand fumbled with the cord in his pocket.

The train was a little late. Slade had been waiting a quarter of an hour when he saw the lights of the train emerge from the cutting and come to a standstill in the station. So wild was the night that he could hear nothing of it. Then the train moved slowly out again. As soon as it was gone, the lights in the station began to go out, one by one; Hobson, the porter, was making ready to go home, his turn of duty completed.

Next, Slade's straining ears heard footsteps.

Young Spalding was striding down the road. With his head bent before the storm, he did not notice the dark mass of the motor-car in the lane, and he walked past it.

Slade counted up to two hundred, slowly, and then he switched on his lights, started the engine, and drove the car out into the road in pursuit. He saw Spalding in the light of the headlamps and drew up alongside.

"Is that Spalding?" he said, striving to make the tone of his voice as natural as possible. "I'd better give you a lift, old man, hadn't I?"

"Thanks very much," said Spalding. "This isn't the sort of night to walk two miles in."

He climbed in and shut the door. No one had seen. No one would know. Slade let in his clutch and drove slowly down the road.

"Bit of luck, seeing you," he said. "I was just on my way home from bridge at Mrs. Clay's when I saw the train come in and remembered it was Wednesday and you'd be walking home. So I thought I'd turn a bit out of my way to take you along."

"Very good of you, I'm sure," said Spalding.

"As a matter of fact," said Slade, speaking slowly and driving slowly, "it wasn't altogether disinterested. I wanted to talk business to you, as it happened."

"Rather an odd time to talk business," said Spalding. "Can't it wait till to-morrow?"

"No, it cannot," said Slade. "It's about the Lady Vere trust."

"Oh, yes. I wrote to remind you last week that you had to make delivery."

"Yes, you did. And I told you, long before that, that it would be inconvenient, with Hammond abroad."

"I don't see that," said Spalding. "I don't see that Hammond's got anything to do with it. Why can't you just hand over and have done with it? I can't do anything to straighten things up until you do."

"As I said, it would be inconvenient."

Slade brought the car to a standstill at the side of the road.

"Look here, Spalding," he said, desperately, "I've never asked a favour of you before. But now I ask you, as a favour, to forego delivery for a bit. Just for three months, Spalding."

But Slade had small hope that his request would be granted. So little hope, in fact, that he brought his left hand out of his pocket holding the piece of wood, with the loop of cord dangling from its ends. He put his arm round the back of Spalding's seat.

"No, I can't, really I can't," said Spalding. "I've got my

duty to my clients to consider. I'm sorry to insist, but you're quite well aware of what my duty is."

"Yes," said Slade. "But I beg you to wait. I implore you to wait, Spalding. There! Perhaps you can guess why, now."

"I see," said Spalding, after a long pause.

"I only want three months," pressed Slade. "Just three months. I can get straight again in three months."

Spalding had known other men who had had the same belief in their ability to get straight in three months. It was unfortunate for Slade—and for Spalding—that Slade had used those words. Spalding hardened his heart.

"No," he said. "I can't promise anything like that. I don't think it's any use continuing this discussion. Perhaps I'd better walk home from here."

He put out his hand to the latch of the door, and, as he did so, Slade jerked the loop of cord over his head. A single turn of Slade's wrist—a thin, bony, old man's wrist, but as strong as steel in that wild moment—tightened the cord about Spalding's throat. Slade swung round in his seat, getting both hands to the piece of wood, twisting madly. His breath hissed between his teeth with the effort, but Spalding never drew breath at all. He lost consciousness long before he was dead. Only Slade's grip of the cord round his throat prevented the dead body from falling forward, doubled up.

Nobody had seen, nobody would know. And what that book had stated about the method of assassination practised by Thugs was perfectly correct.

Slade had gained, now, the time in which he could get his affairs into order. With all the promise of his current speculations, with all his financial ability, he would be able to recoup himself for his past losses. It only remained to dispose of Spalding's body, and he had planned to do that very satisfactorily. Just for a moment Slade felt as if all this were only some heated dream, some nightmare, but then he came

back to reality and went on with the plan he had in mind.

He pulled the dead man's knees forward so that the corpse lay back in the seat, against the side of the car. He put the car in gear, let in his clutch, and drove rapidly down the road—much faster than when he had been arguing with Spalding. Low water was in three-quarters of an hour's time, and the sands were ten miles away.

Slade drove fast through the wild night. There was not a soul about in those lonely lanes. He knew the way by heart—he had driven repeatedly over that route recently in order to memorize it.

The car bumped down the last bit of lane, and Slade drew up on the edge of the sands.

It was pitch dark, and the bitter wind was howling about him, under the black sky. Despite the noise of the wind, he could hear the surf breaking far away, two miles away, across the level sands. He climbed out of the driver's seat and walked round to the other door. When he opened it the dead man fell sideways, into his arms.

With an effort, Slade held him up, while he groped into the back of the car for the plough chain and the iron weights. He crammed the weights into the dead man's pockets, and he wound the chain round and round the dead man's body, tucking in the ends to make it all secure. With that mass of iron to hold it down, the body would never be found again when dropped into the sea at the lowest ebb of spring tide.

Slade tried now to lift the body in his arms, to carry it over the sands. He reeled and strained, but he was not strong enough—Slade was a man of slight figure, and past his prime. The sweat on his forehead was icy in the icy wind.

For a second, doubt overwhelmed him, lest all his plans should fail for want of bodily strength. But he forced himself into thinking clearly; he forced his frail body into obeying the vehement commands of his brain.

He turned round, still holding the dead man upright.

Stooping, he got the heavy burden on his shoulders. He drew the arms round his neck, and, with a convulsive effort, he got the legs up round his hips. The dead man now rode him pick-a-back. Bending nearly double, he was able to carry the heavy weight in that fashion, the arms tight round his neck, the legs tight round his waist.

He set off, staggering, down the imperceptible slope of the sands towards the sound of the surf. The sands were soft beneath his feet—it was because of this softness that he had not driven the car down to the water's edge. He could afford to take no chances of being embogged.

The icy wind shrieked round him all that long way. The tide was nearly two miles out. That was why Slade had chosen this place. In the depth of winter, no one would go out to the water's edge at low tide for months to come.

He staggered on over the sands, clasping the limbs of the body close about him. Desperately, he forced himself forward, not stopping to rest, for he only just had time now to reach the water's edge before the flow began. He went on and on, driving his exhausted body with fierce urgings from his frightened brain.

Then, at last, he saw it: a line of white in the darkness which indicated the water's edge. Farther out, the waves were breaking in an inferno of noise. Here, the fragments of the rollers were only just sufficient to move the surface a little.

He was going to make quite sure of things. Steadying himself, he stepped into the water, wading in farther and farther so as to be able to drop the body into comparatively deep water. He held to his resolve, staggering through the icy water, knee deep, thigh deep, until it was nearly at his waist. This was far enough. He stopped, gasping in the darkness.

He leaned over to one side, to roll the body off his back. It did not move. He pulled at its arms. They were obstinate. He could not loosen them. He shook himself, wildly. He

tore at the legs round his waist. Still the thing clung to him. Wild with panic and fear, he flung himself about in a mad effort to rid himself of the burden. It clung on as though it were alive. He could not break its grip.

Then another breaker came in. It splashed about him, wetting him far above his waist. The tide had begun to turn now, and the tide on those sands comes in like a racehorse.

He made another effort to cast off the load, and, when it still held him fast, he lost his nerve and tried to struggle out of the sea. But it was too much for his exhausted body. The weight of the corpse and of the iron with which it was loaded overbore him. He fell.

He struggled up again in the foam-streaked, dark sea, staggered a few steps, fell again—and did not rise. The dead man's arms were round his neck, throttling him, strangling him. Rigor mortis had set in and Spalding's muscles had refused to relax.

# *An Attempt at Murder*

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**K A R E L Č A P E K**

THAT evening Mr. Tomsa, a higher civil servant, was just relishing his ear-phones, and with a bland smile was listening in on the wireless to a pleasant rendering of Dvořák's dances—that's something like a tune, he said to himself contentedly—when all of a sudden there were a couple of loud reports from outside and glass was scattered with a crash from the window above his head. (The room in which Mr. Tomsa was sitting was on the ground-floor.)

And then he did what any of us would do: first of all, he waited for a moment, to see what was going to happen next, and then, and not till then, he took fright; for he saw that somebody had fired twice at him through the window by which he was sitting. There, opposite him in the doorway, a splinter had been ripped away and beneath it a bullet was embedded. His first impulse was to rush out into the street and with his bare hands to seize the ruffian by the collar. But when a man is getting on in years and has a certain dignity to keep up, he generally gives a first impulse the miss, and decides in favour of the second one. And that is why Mr. Tomsa made a dash for the telephone and rang up the police:

"Hollo!" he shouted. "Send someone here at once, an attempt has just been made to murder me."

"Where is it?" said a sleepy and listless voice.

"Here, in my flat." Mr. Tomsa flared up in sudden anger, as if the police could help it. "It's perfectly outrageous to



start shooting like this, for no reason at all, at a law-abiding citizen, who's sitting quietly at home. This has got to be looked into very strictly. It's a fine state of affairs when—"

"All right," the sleepy voice interrupted him. "I'll send someone to you."

Mr. Tomsa fumed with impatience. It seemed to him an eternity before this someone made his appearance, but in reality only twenty minutes elapsed before a stolid police-inspector had reached him and was examining with interest the window through which the shots had passed.

"Someone's been shooting here, sir," he said soberly.

"I could have told you that," burst forth Mr. Tomsa. "Why, I was sitting here by the window."

"Seven millimetres calibre," announced the inspector, extricating the bullet from the door by means of a knife. "Looks as if it's been fired from an old army revolver. Just look here. The chap, whoever he was, must have been standing on the fence. If he'd been standing on the pavement the bullet would have gone in higher up. That means he must have been aiming at you, sir."

"That's funny," observed Mr. Tomsa bitterly. "I almost thought he was trying to hit the door."

"And who did it?" asked the inspector, ignoring this interruption.

"I'm sorry I can't give you his address," said Mr. Tomsa. "I didn't see the gentleman and I forgot to invite him inside."

"That makes things difficult," remarked the inspector placidly. "And who do you suspect?"

Mr. Tomsa's supply of patience gave out.

"Suspect?" he began irritably. "Man alive, I never saw the blackguard, and even if he'd been good enough to wait till I'd blown a kiss to him through the window, I couldn't have recognized him in the darkness. My dear sir, if I knew who it was, do you think I'd have bothered you to come here?"

"Well, yes, there's something in that, sir," replied the in-

spector soothingly. "But perhaps you can think of somebody who'd profit by your death, or who might want to pay you out for something. . . . You see, sir, this wasn't no attempted burglary. A burglar don't shoot unless he has to. But there may be somebody who's got a grudge against you. That's for you to say, sir, and then we'll look into it."

Mr. Tomsa was taken aback. He hadn't thought of it in that light.

"I haven't the faintest idea," he said waveringly, casting a glance over the peaceful life he had led as a civil servant and a bachelor. "Who could have a grudge against me?" he said in bewilderment. "As far as I know, I haven't a single enemy in the world, most positively I haven't. The thing's quite impossible," he added, shaking his head. "Why, I never fall out with anyone; I keep entirely to myself. I never go anywhere, I never poke my nose into anything. What should anyone want to pay me out for?"

The inspector shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know, sir. But perhaps you'll think of something by tomorrow. You won't be nervous here by yourself?"

"No," said Mr. Tomsa in a reflective tone. It's queer, he said to himself uneasily when he was alone; why anybody should shoot at me of all people. Why I'm almost a hermit. I attend to my work in the office and I go home—why, I scarcely ever come into contact with anyone. Why should they want to shoot me, then? he wondered with increasing bitterness at such ungracious behaviour; little by little he began to pity himself. Here I've been slaving away like a horse, he said to himself, even taking work home with me, never extravagant, never giving myself a treat, living like a snail in its shell, and bang! someone comes along to put a bullet into me. My goodness, it's queer how fiendish people are, marvelled Mr. Tomsa aghast. What have I ever done to anyone? Why should anyone have such a shocking, such an insane hatred for me?

Perhaps there's some mistake, he began to reassure him-

self, as he sat on the bed, holding the boot he had taken off. The man just took me for somebody else he had a grudge against. That must be it, he said to himself with relief, because why, why should anyone hate me like that?

The boot fell from Mr. Tomsa's hand. Well, of course, he suddenly reminded himself with a slight sense of embarrassment, that was a silly thing for me to do, but it was really nothing but a slip of the tongue; I was talking to Roubal and, without meaning to, I made a nasty remark about his wife. Of course, everyone knows the minx carries on with Tom, Dick, and Harry, and he knows it too, but he doesn't want to let people see he does. And I, ass that I was, went and stupidly blurted it out. . . . Mr. Tomsa remembered how Roubal had merely gulped and dug his nails into his clenched hands. Good heavens, he said to himself horrified, the man was cut to the quick. Why he must be madly in love with her. Of course, I tried to smooth matters over, but my word, didn't he bite his lips! There's no doubt he's got good reason for hating me, reflected Mr. Tomsa gloomily. I know he didn't shoot at me, that's nonsense, but I really couldn't be surprised if—

Mr. Tomsa stared at the floor abashed. Or what about that tailor, he reminded himself, very constrainedly. For fifteen years I used to order my clothes from him and then one day I was told that he was in the last stage of consumption. Of course, a man fights shy of wearing clothes that a consumptive tailor has been coughing into, so I stopped getting my suits from him. And then he came and begged and prayed of me, saying he hadn't got a stitch of work to do, that his wife was ill and that he wanted to send his children away; if I'd only let him have the pleasure of my custom again. Good heavens, the poor fellow looked as pale as a ghost and from the way he sweated I could see how ill he was. Mr. Kolinsky, I said to him, look here, it's no use, I need a better tailor; you haven't given me satisfaction. I'll try my hardest, sir, he stammered, sweating with fright and

shame; it's a wonder he didn't burst out crying. And I, Mr. Tomsa reminded himself, I just sent him away saying "I'll see," the sort of remark that poor devils like that know only too well. There's a man who might hate me, said Mr. Tomsa to himself in alarm; it must be an awful thing to go and beg and pray of someone for your very life and to be sent away so unfeelingly. But what was I to do with him? I know he couldn't have done it, but—

Mr. Tomsa began to feel more and more downhearted. That was another unpleasant business, he reminded himself, the way I gave our office messenger a wiggling. There was a file I couldn't find and so I sent for the old fellow and called him names as if he'd been a schoolboy, and in front of other people, too. This is what you call keeping things in order, I suppose, you idiot, you make the whole place look like a pig-sty; I ought to give you the sack. And then I found the file in my own drawer. And the poor old chap never murmured, he just trembled and blinked his eyes. A surge of heat caused Mr. Tomsa to wince. A man can't very well apologize to an underling, he said to himself peevishly, even if he has been a little hard on him. Wait a bit, I'll give the old fellow some cast-off clothes; but perhaps that would be humiliating for him, too.

Mr. Tomsa now found it unbearable to continue lying in bed; the counterpane was stifling him. He sat on the bed with his arms round his knees and stared into the darkness. Then there was that affair with young Morávek in the office, he reflected with a pang. He's a well-educated fellow and writes poems. And when he made a blunder in dealing with those papers, I said to him: *Do it all over again, young man*, and I meant to throw the papers on to the table, but they fell under his feet, and when he bent down to pick them up he was quite red, his eyes were red. I could have kicked myself, growled Mr. Tomsa. Why, I'm quite fond of the young fellow, and then to go and humiliate him like that, even without intending to.

Another face floated into Mr. Tomsa's mind, the pale and hollow face of his colleague, Wankl. Poor Wankl, he said to himself, he wanted to be clerk in charge, and I was appointed instead. It would have meant a few hundred crowns more every year and he's got six children. I heard that he wanted to have his eldest daughter trained as a singer, but he can't afford it, and I was promoted above his head because he's such a slow-witted duffer and a drudge. His wife's bad-tempered, terribly skinny and bad-tempered through having to be always pinching and scraping; he swallows a dry roll for his midday lunch—Mr. Tomsa lapsed into dismal thoughts. Poor Wankl, he must feel down in the mouth when he sees me without any family, getting a bigger salary than he has; but how can I help it? I always feel rather uncomfortable when he looks at me in that surly and reproachful way he's got.

Mr. Tomsa rubbed his forehead, on which the sweat of anguish had broken out. Yes, he said to himself, and then there was a waiter who did me out of a few crowns; and I sent for the proprietor and he dismissed the waiter on the spot. You thief, he snarled at him, I'll see that nobody in Prague gives you a job. And the man never said a word, but just went away; I could see his shoulder-blades sticking out under his jacket.

Mr. Tomsa now found his bed unbearable; he sat down by his wireless set and put on the head-phones; but the wireless set was silent, amid the silent night, the silent hours of the night, and Mr. Tomsa covered his face with his hands and recalled all the people whom he hadn't got on with and had forgotten about.

In the morning he called at the police-station; he was rather pale and ill at ease. "Well, sir," asked the police inspector, "have you thought of anyone who's likely to have a grudge against you?"

Mr. Tomsa shook his head. "I don't know," he said hesitantly. "You see, there's so many who are likely to have a

grudge against me that—" He made a helpless gesture with his hand. "The fact of the matter is you never can tell how many people you may have done harm to. You know, I'm not going to sit by that window any more. And I've come to ask you to drop the whole matter."

# *The Sins of Prince Saradine*

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G. K. CHESTERTON

WHEN Flambeau took his month's holiday from his office in Westminster he took it in a small sailing-boat, so small that it passed much of its time as a rowing-boat. He took it, moreover, in little rivers in the Eastern counties, rivers so small that the boat looked like a magic boat, sailing on land through meadows and cornfields. The vessel was just comfortable for two people; there was room only for necessities, and Flambeau had stocked it with such things as his special philosophy considered necessary. They reduced themselves, apparently, to four essentials: tins of salmon, if he should want to eat; loaded revolvers, if he should want to fight; a bottle of brandy, presumably in case he should faint; and a priest, presumably in case he should die. With this light luggage he crawled down the little Norfolk rivers, intending to reach the Broads at last, but meanwhile delighting in the overhanging gardens and meadows, the mirrored mansions or villages, lingering to fish in the pools and corners, and in some sense hugging the shore.

Like a true philosopher, Flambeau had no aim in his holiday; but, like a true philosopher, he had an excuse. He had a sort of half purpose, which he took just so seriously that its success would crown the holiday, but just so lightly that its failure would not spoil it. Years ago, when he had been a king of thieves and the most famous figure in Paris, he had often received wild communications of approval, denunciation, or even love; but one had, somehow, stuck in his mem-

ory. It consisted simply of a visiting-card, in an envelope with an English postmark. On the back of the card was written in French and in green ink: "If you ever retire and become respectable, come and see me. I want to meet you, for I have met all the other great men of my time. That trick of yours of getting one detective to arrest the other was the most splendid scene in French history." On the front of the card was engraved in the formal fashion, "Prince Saradine, Reed House, Reed Island, Norfolk."

He had not troubled much about the prince then, beyond ascertaining that he had been a brilliant and fashionable figure in southern Italy. In his youth, it was said, he had eloped with a married woman of high rank; the escapade was scarcely startling in his social world, but it had clung to men's minds because of an additional tragedy: the alleged suicide of the insulted husband, who appeared to have flung himself over a precipice in Sicily. The prince then lived in Vienna for a time, but his more recent years seemed to have been passed in perpetual and restless travel. But when Flambeau, like the prince himself, had left European celebrity and settled in England, it occurred to him that he might pay a surprise visit to this eminent exile in the Norfolk Broads. Whether he should find the place he had no idea; and, indeed, it was sufficiently small and forgotten. But, as things fell out, he found it much sooner than he expected.

They had moored their boat one night under a bank veiled in high grasses and short pollarded trees. Sleep, after heavy sculling, had come to them early, and by a corresponding accident they awoke before it was light. To speak more strictly, they awoke before it was daylight; for a large lemon moon was only just setting in the forest of high grass above their heads, and the sky was of a vivid violet-blue, nocturnal but bright. Both men had simultaneously a reminiscence of childhood, of the elfin and adventurous time when tall weeds close over us like woods. Standing up thus



against the large low moon, the daisies really seemed to be giant daisies, the dandelions to be giant dandelions. Somehow it reminded them of the dado of a nursery wall-paper. The drop of the river-bed sufficed to sink them under the roots of all shrubs and flowers and make them gaze upwards at the grass.

"By Jove!" said Flambeau, "it's like being in fairyland."

Father Brown sat bolt upright in the boat and crossed himself. His movement was so abrupt that his friend asked him, with a mild stare, what was the matter.

"The people who wrote the mediæval ballads," answered the priest, "knew more about fairies than you do. It isn't only nice things that happen in fairyland."

"Oh, bosh!" said Flambeau. "Only nice things could happen under such an innocent moon. I am for pushing on now and seeing what does really come. We may die and rot before we ever see again such a moon or such a mood."

"All right," said Father Brown. "I never said it was always wrong to enter fairyland. I only said it was always dangerous."

They pushed slowly up the brightening river; the glowing violet of the sky and the pale gold of the moon grew fainter and fainter, and faded into that vast colourless cosmos that precedes the colours of the dawn. When the first faint stripes of red and gold and grey split the horizon from end to end they were broken by the black bulk of a town or village which sat on the river just ahead of them. It was already an easy twilight, in which all things were visible, when they came under the hanging roofs and bridges of this riverside hamlet. The houses, with their long, low, stooping roofs, seemed to come down to drink at the river, like huge grey and red cattle. The broadening and whitening dawn had already turned to working daylight before they saw any living creature on the wharves and bridges of that silent town. Eventually they saw a very placid and prosperous man in his shirt sleeves, with a face as round as the recently

sunken moon, and rays of red whisker around the low arc of it, who was leaning on a post above the sluggish tide. By an impulse not to be analysed, Flambeau rose to his full height in the swaying boat and shouted at the man to ask if he knew Reed Island or Reed House. The prosperous man's smile grew slightly more expansive, and he simply pointed up the river towards the next bend of it. Flambeau went ahead without further speech.

The boat took many such grassy corners and followed many such reedy and silent reaches of river; but before the search had become monotonous they had swung round a specially sharp angle and come into the silence of a sort of pool or lake, the sight of which instinctively arrested them. For in the middle of this wider piece of water, fringed on every side with rushes, lay a long, low islet, along which ran a long, low house or bungalow built of bamboo or some kind of tough tropic cane. The upstanding rods of bamboo which made the walls were pale yellow, the sloping rods that made the roof were of darker red or brown, otherwise the long house was a thing of repetition and monotony. The early morning breeze rustled the reeds round the island and sang in the strange ribbed house as in a giant pan-pipe.

"By George!" cried Flambeau; "here is the place, after all! Here is Reed Island, if ever there was one. Here is Reed House, if it is anywhere. I believe that fat man with whiskers was a fairy."

"Perhaps," remarked Father Brown impartially. "If he was, he was a bad fairy."

But even as he spoke the impetuous Flambeau had run his boat ashore in the rattling reeds, and they stood in the long, quaint islet beside the odd and silent house.

The house stood with its back, as it were, to the river and the only landing-stage; the main entrance was on the other side, and looked down the long island garden. The visitors approached it, therefore, by a small path running round nearly three sides of the house, close under the low eaves.

Through three different windows on three different sides they looked in on the same long, well-lit room, panelled in light wood, with a large number of looking-glasses, and laid out as for an elegant lunch. The front door, when they came round to it at last, was flanked by two turquoise-blue flower pots. It was opened by a butler of the drearier type—long, lean, grey and listless—who murmured that Prince Saradine was from home at present, but was expected hourly; the house being kept ready for him and his guests. The exhibition of the card with the scrawl of green ink awoke a flicker of life in the parchment face of the depressed retainer, and it was with a certain shaky courtesy that he suggested that the strangers should remain. "His Highness may be here any minute," he said, "and would be distressed to have just missed any gentleman he had invited. We have orders always to keep a little cold lunch for him and his friends; and I am sure he would wish it to be offered."

Moved with curiosity to this minor adventure, Flambeau assented gracefully, and followed the old man, who ushered him ceremoniously into the long, lightly panelled room. There was nothing very notable about it, except the rather unusual alternation of many long, low windows with many long, low oblongs of looking-glass, which gave a singular air of lightness and unsubstantialness to the place. It was somehow like lunching out of doors. One or two pictures of a quiet kind hung in the corners, one a large grey photograph of a very young man in uniform, another a red chalk sketch of two long-haired boys. Asked by Flambeau whether the soldiery person was the prince, the butler answered shortly in the negative; it was the prince's younger brother, Captain Stephen Saradine, he said. And with that the old man seemed to dry up suddenly and lose all taste for conversation.

After lunch had tailed off with exquisite coffee and liqueurs, the guests were introduced to the garden, the library, and the housekeeper—a dark, handsome lady, of no

little majesty, and rather like a plutonic Madonna. It appeared that she and the butler were the only survivors of the prince's original foreign *ménage*, all the other servants now in the house being new and collected in Norfolk by the housekeeper. This latter lady went by the name of Mrs. Anthony, but she spoke with a slight Italian accent, and Flambeau did not doubt that Anthony was a Norfolk version of some more Latin name. Mr. Paul, the butler, also had a faintly foreign air, but he was in tongue and training English, as are many of the most polished men-servants of the cosmopolitan nobility.

Pretty and unique as it was, the place had about it a curious luminous sadness. Hours passed in it like days. The long, well-windowed rooms were full of daylight, but it seemed a dead daylight. And through all other incidental noises, the sound of talk, the clink of glasses, or the passing feet of servants, they could hear on all sides of the house the melancholy noise of the river.

"We have taken a wrong turning, and come to a wrong place," said Father Brown, looking out of the window at the grey-green sedges and the silver flood. "Never 'mind; one can sometimes do good by being the right person in the wrong place."

Father Brown, though commonly a silent, was an oddly sympathetic little man, and in those few but endless hours he unconsciously sank deeper into the secrets of Reed House than his professional friend. He had that knack of friendly silence which is so essential to gossip; and saying scarcely a word, he probably obtained from his new acquaintances all that in any case they would have told. The butler indeed was naturally uncommunicative. He betrayed a sullen and almost animal affection for his master; who, he said, had been very badly treated. The chief offender seemed to be his highness's brother, whose name alone would lengthen the old man's lantern jaws and pucker his parrot nose into a sneer. Captain Stephen was a ne'er-do-weel, apparently,

and had drained his benevolent brother of hundreds and thousands; forced him to fly from fashionable life and live quietly in this retreat. That was all Paul, the butler, would say, and Paul was obviously a partisan.

The Italian housekeeper was somewhat more communicative, being, as Brown fancied, somewhat less content. Her tone about her master was faintly acid; though not without a certain awe. Flambeau and his friend were standing in the room of the looking-glasses examining the red sketch of the two boys, when the housekeeper swept in swiftly on some domestic errand. It was a peculiarity of this glittering, glass-panelled place that anyone entering was reflected in four or five mirrors at once; and Father Brown, without turning round, stopped in the middle of a sentence of family criticism. But Flambeau, who had his face close up to the picture, was already saying in a loud voice, "The brothers Saradine, I suppose. They both look innocent enough. It would be hard to say which is the good brother and which the bad." Then, realising the lady's presence, he turned the conversation with some triviality, and strolled out into the garden. But Father Brown still gazed steadily at the red crayon sketch; and Mrs. Anthony still gazed steadily at Father Brown.

She had large and tragic brown eyes, and her olive face glowed darkly with a curious and painful wonder—as of one doubtful of a stranger's identity or purpose. Whether the little priest's coat and creed touched some southern memories of confession, or whether she fancied he knew more than he did, she said to him in a low voice as to a fellow plotter, "He is right enough in one way, your friend. He says it would be hard to pick out the good and bad brothers. Oh, it would be hard, it would be mighty hard, to pick out the good one."

"I don't understand you," said Father Brown, and began to move away.

The woman took a step nearer to him, with thunderous

brows and a sort of savage stoop, like a bull lowering his horns.

"There isn't a good one," she hissed. "There was badness enough in the captain taking all that money, but I don't think there was much goodness in the prince giving it. The captain's not the only one with something against him."

A light dawned on the cleric's averted face, and his mouth formed silently the word "blackmail." Even as he did so the woman turned an abrupt white face over her shoulder and almost fell. The door had opened soundlessly and the pale Paul stood like a ghost in the doorway. By the weird trick of the reflecting walls, it seemed as if five Pauls had entered by five doors simultaneously.

"His Highness," he said, "has just arrived."

In the same flash the figure of a man had passed outside the first window, crossing the sunlit pane like a lighted stage. An instant later he passed at the second window and the many mirrors repainted in successive frames the same eagle profile and marching figure. He was erect and alert, but his hair was white and his complexion of an odd ivory yellow. He had that short, curved Roman nose which generally goes with long, lean cheeks and chin, but these were partly masked by moustache and imperial. The moustache was much darker than the beard, giving an effect slightly theatrical, and he was dressed up to the same dashing part, having a white top hat, an orchid in his coat, a yellow waistcoat and yellow gloves which he flapped and swung as he walked. When he came round to the front door they heard the stiff Paul open it, and heard the new arrival say cheerfully, "Well, you see I have come." The stiff Mr. Paul bowed and answered in his inaudible manner; for a few minutes their conversation could not be heard. Then the butler said, "Everything is at your disposal"; and the glove-flapping Prince Saradine came gaily into the room to greet them. They beheld once more that spectral scene—five princes entering a room with five doors.

The prince put the white hat and yellow gloves on the table and offered his hand quite cordially.

"Delighted to see you here, Mr. Flambeau," he said. "Knowing you very well by reputation, if that's not an indiscreet remark."

"Not at all," answered Flambeau, laughing. "I am not sensitive. Very few reputations are gained by unsullied virtue."

The prince flashed a sharp look at him to see if the retort had any personal point; then he laughed also and offered chairs to everyone, including himself.

"Pleasant little place, this, I think," he said with a detached air. "Not much to do, I fear; but the fishing is really good."

The priest, who was staring at him with the grave stare of a baby, was haunted by some fancy that escaped definition. He looked at the grey, carefully curled hair, yellow white visage, and slim, somewhat foppish figure. These were not unnatural, though perhaps a shade *prononcé*, like the outfit of a figure behind the footlights. The nameless interest lay in something else, in the very framework of the face; Brown was tormented with a half memory of having seen it somewhere before. The man looked like some old friend of his dressed up. Then he suddenly remembered the mirrors, and put his fancy down to some psychological effect of that multiplication of human masks.

Prince Saradine distributed his social attentions between his guests with great gaiety and tact. Finding the detective of a sporting turn and eager to employ his holiday, he guided Flambeau and Flambeau's boat down to the best fishing spot in the stream, and was back in his own canoe in twenty minutes to join Father Brown in the library and plunge equally politely into the priest's more philosophic pleasures. He seemed to know a great deal both about the fishing and the books, though of these not the most edifying; he spoke five or six languages, though chiefly the slang of each. He had evidently lived in varied cities and very motley

societies, for some of his cheerfulest stories were about gambling hells and opium dens, Australian bushrangers or Italian brigands. Father Brown knew that the once celebrated Saradine had spent his last few years in almost ceaseless travel, but he had not guessed that the travels were so disreputable or so amusing.

Indeed, with all his dignity of a man of the world, Prince Saradine radiated to such sensitive observers as the priest, a certain atmosphere of the restless and even the unreliable. His face was fastidious, but his eye was wild; he had little nervous tricks, like a man shaken by drink or drugs, and he neither had, nor professed to have, his hand on the helm of household affairs. All these were left to the two old servants, especially to the butler, who was plainly the central pillar of the house. Mr. Paul, indeed, was not so much a butler as a sort of steward or, even, chamberlain; he dined privately, but with almost as much pomp as his master; he was feared by all the servants; and he consulted with the prince decorously, but somewhat unbendingly—rather as if he were the prince's solicitor. The sombre housekeeper was a mere shadow in comparison; indeed, she seemed to efface herself and wait only on the butler, and Brown heard no more of those volcanic whispers which had half told him of the younger brother who blackmailed the elder. Whether the prince was really being thus bled by the absent captain, he could not be certain, but there was something insecure and secretive about Saradine that made the tale by no means incredible.

When they went once more into the long hall with the windows and the mirrors, yellow evening was dropping over the waters and the willowy banks; and a bittern sounded in the distance like an elf upon his dwarfish drum. The same singular sentiment of some sad and evil fairyland crossed the priest's mind again like a little grey cloud. "I wish Flambeau were back," he muttered.



"Do you believe in doom?" asked the restless Prince Saradine suddenly.

"No," answered his guest. "I believe in Doomsday."

The prince turned from the window and stared at him in a singular manner, his face in shadow against the sunset. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that we here are on the wrong side of the tapestry," answered Father Brown. "The things that happen here do not seem to mean anything; they mean something somewhere else. Somewhere else retribution will come on the real offender. Here it often seems to fall on the wrong person."

The prince made an inexplicable noise like an animal; in his shadowed face the eyes were shining queerly. A new and shrewd thought exploded silently in the other's mind. Was there another meaning in Saradine's blend of brilliancy and abruptness? Was the prince— Was he perfectly sane? He was repeating, "The wrong person—the wrong person," many more times than was natural in a social exclamation.

Then Father Brown awoke tardily to a second truth. In the mirrors before him he could see the silent door standing open, and the silent Mr. Paul standing in it, with his usual pallid impassiveness.

"I thought it better to announce at once," he said, with the same stiff respectfulness as of an old family lawyer, "a boat rowed by six men has come to the landing-stage, and there's a gentleman sitting in the stern."

"A boat!" repeated the prince; "a gentleman?" and he rose to his feet.

There was a startled silence punctuated only by the odd noise of the bird in the sedge; and then, before anyone could speak again, a new face and figure passed in profile round the three sunlit windows, as the prince had passed an hour or two before. But except for the accident that both outlines were aquiline, they had little in common. Instead of the new

white topper of Saradine, was a black one of antiquated or foreign shape; under it was a young and very solemn face, clean shaven, blue about its resolute chin, and carrying a faint suggestion of the young Napoleon. The association was assisted by something old and odd about the whole get-up, as of a man who had never troubled to change the fashions of his fathers. He had a shabby blue frock coat, a red, soldierly looking waistcoat, and a kind of coarse white trousers common among the early Victorians, but strangely incongruous today. From all this old clothes-shop his olive face stood out strangely young and monstrosly sincere.

"The deuce!" said Prince Saradine, and clapping on his white hat he went to the front door himself, flinging it open on the sunset garden.

By that time the new-comer and his followers were drawn up on the lawn like a small stage army. The six boatmen had pulled the boat well up on shore, and were guarding it almost menacingly, holding their oars erect like spears. They were swarthy men, and some of them wore earrings. But one of them stood forward beside the olive-faced young man in the red waistcoat, and carried a large black case of unfamiliar form.

"Your name," said the young man, "is Saradine?"

Saradine assented rather negligently.

The new-comer had dull, dog-like brown eyes, as different as possible from the restless and glittering grey eyes of the prince. But once again Father Brown was tortured with a sense of having seen somewhere a replica of the face; and once again he remembered the repetitions of the glass-panelled room, and put down the coincidence to that. "Confound this crystal palace!" he muttered. "One sees everything too many times. It's like a dream."

"If you are Prince Saradine," said the young man, "I may tell you that my name is Antonelli."

"Antonelli," repeated the prince languidly. "Somehow I remember the name."

"Permit me to present myself," said the young Italian.

With his left hand he politely took off his old-fashioned top-hat; with his right he caught Prince Saradine so ringing a crack across the face that the white top hat rolled down the steps and one of the blue flower-pots rocked upon its pedestal.

The Prince, whatever he was, was evidently not a coward; he sprang at his enemy's throat and almost bore him backwards to the grass. But his enemy extricated himself with a singularly inappropriate air of hurried politeness.

"That is all right," he said, panting and in halting English. "I have insulted. I will give satisfaction. Marco, open the case."

The man beside him with the earrings and the big black case proceeded to unlock it. He took out of it two long Italian rapiers, with splendid steel hilts and blades, which he planted point downwards in the lawn. The strange young man standing facing the entrance with his yellow and vindictive face, the two swords standing up in the turf like two crosses in a cemetery, and the line of the ranked towers behind, gave it all an odd appearance of being some barbaric court of justice. But everything else was unchanged, so sudden had been the interruption. The sunset gold still glowed on the lawn, and the bittern still boomed as announcing some small but dreadful destiny.

"Prince Saradine," said the man called Antonelli, "when I was an infant in the cradle you killed my father and stole my mother; my father was the more fortunate. You did not kill him fairly, as I am going to kill you. You and my wicked mother took him driving to a lonely pass in Sicily, flung him down a cliff, and went on your way. I could imitate you if I chose, but imitating you is too vile. I have followed you all over the world, and you have always fled from me. But this is the end of the world—and of you. I have you now, and I give you the chance you never gave my father. Choose one of those swords."

Prince Saradine, with contracted brows, seemed to hesitate a moment, but his ears were still singing with the blow, and he sprang forward and snatched at one of the hilts. Father Brown had also sprung forward, striving to compose the dispute; but he soon found his personal presence made matters worse. Saradine was a French freemason and a fierce atheist, and a priest moved him by the law of contraries. And for the other man neither priest nor layman moved him at all. This young man with the Bonaparte face and the brown eyes was something far sterner than a puritan—a pagan. He was a simple slayer from the morning of the earth; a man of the stone age—a man of stone.

One hope remained, the summoning of the household; and Father Brown ran back into the house. He found, however, that all the under servants had been given a holiday ashore by the autocrat Paul, and that only the sombre Mrs. Anthony moved uneasily about the long rooms. But the moment she turned a ghastly face upon him, he resolved one of the riddles of the house of mirrors. The heavy brown eyes of Antonelli were the heavy brown eyes of Mrs. Anthony; and in a flash he saw half the story.

"Your son is outside," he said without wasting words; "either he or the prince will be killed. Where is Mr. Paul?"

"He is at the landing-stage," said the woman faintly. "He is—he is—signalling for help."

"Mrs. Anthony," said Father Brown seriously, "there is no time for nonsense. My friend has his boat down the river fishing. Your son's boat is guarded by your son's men. There is only this one canoe; what is Mr. Paul doing with it?"

"Santa Maria! I do not know," she said; and swooned all her length on the matted floor.

Father Brown lifted her to a sofa, flung a pot of water over her, shouted for help, and then rushed down to the landing-stage of the little island. But the canoe was already in mid-stream, and old Paul was pulling and pushing it up the river with an energy incredible at his years.

"I will save my master," he cried, his eyes blazing maniacally. "I will save him yet!"

Father Brown could do nothing but gaze after the boat as it struggled up-stream and pray that the old man might waken the little town in time.

"A duel is bad enough," he muttered, rubbing up his rough dust-coloured hair, "but there's something wrong about this duel, even as a duel. I feel it in my bones. But what can it be?"

As he stood staring at the water, a wavering mirror of sunset, he heard from the other end of the island garden a small but unmistakable sound—the cold concussion of steel. He turned his head.

Away on the farthest cape or headland of the long islet, on a strip of turf beyond the last rank of roses, the duellists had already crossed swords. Evening above them was a dome of virgin gold, and, distant as they were, every detail was picked out. They had cast off their coats, but the yellow waistcoat and white hair of Saradine, the red waistcoat and white trousers of Antonelli, glittered in the level light like the colours of the dancing clockwork dolls. The two swords sparkled from point to pommel like two diamond pins. There was something frightful in the two figures appearing so little and so gay. They looked like two butterflies trying to pin each other to a cork.

Father Brown ran as hard as he could, his little legs going like a wheel. But when he came to the field of combat he found he was both too late and too early—too late to stop the strife, under the shadow of the grim Sicilians leaning on their oars, and too early to anticipate any disastrous issue of it. For the two men were singularly well matched, the prince using his skill with a sort of cynical confidence, the Sicilian using his with a murderous care. Few finer fencing matches can ever have been seen in crowded amphitheatres than that which tinkled and sparkled on that forgotten island in the reedy river. The dizzy fight was balanced so long that hope

began to revive in the protesting priest; by all common probability Paul must soon come back with the police. It would be some comfort even if Flambeau came back from his fishing, for Flambeau, physically speaking, was worth four other men. But there was no sign of Flambeau, and, what was much queerer, no sign of Paul or the police. No other raft or stick was left to float on; in that lost island in that vast nameless pool, they were cut off as on a rock in the Pacific.

Almost as he had the thought the ringing of the rapiers quickened to a rattle, the prince's arms flew up, and the point shot out behind between his shoulder-blades. He went over with a great whirling movement, almost like one throwing the half of a boy's cart-wheel. The sword flew from his hand like a shooting star, and dived into the distant river. And he himself sank with so earth-shaking a subsidence that he broke a big rose-tree with his body and shook up into the sky a cloud of red earth—like the smoke of some heathen sacrifice. The Sicilian had made blood-offering to the ghost of his father.

The priest was instantly on his knees by the corpse; but only to make too sure that it was a corpse. As he was still trying some last hopeless tests he heard for the first time voices from farther up the river, and saw a police boat shoot up to the landing-stage, with constables and other important people, including the excited Paul. The little priest rose with a distinctly dubious grimace.

"Now, why on earth," he muttered, "why on earth couldn't he have come before?"

Some seven minutes later the island was occupied by an invasion of townsfolk and police, and the latter had put their hands on the victorious duellist, ritually reminding him that anything he said might be used against him.

"I shall not say anything," said the monomaniac, with a wonderful and peaceful face. "I shall never say anything more. I am very happy, and I only want to be hanged."

Then he shut his mouth as they led him away, and it is the strange but certain truth that he never opened it again in this world, except to say "Guilty" at his trial.

Father Brown had stared at the suddenly crowded garden, the arrest of the man of blood, the carrying away of the corpse after its examination by the doctor, rather as one watches the break-up of some ugly dream; he was motionless, like a man in a nightmare. He gave his name and address as a witness, but declined their offer of a boat to the shore, and remained alone in the island garden, gazing at the broken rose bush and the whole green theatre of that swift and inexplicable tragedy. The light died along the river; mist rose in the marshy banks; a few belated birds flitted fitfully across.

Stuck stubbornly in his sub-consciousness (which was an unusually lively one) was an unspeakable certainty that there was something still unexplained. This sense that had clung to him all day could not be fully explained by his fancy about "looking-glass land." Somehow he had not seen the real story, but some game or masque. And yet people do not get hanged or run through the body for the sake of a charade.

As he sat on the steps of the landing-stage ruminating he grew conscious of the tall, dark streak of a sail coming silently down the shining river, and sprang to his feet with such a backrush of feeling that he almost wept.

"Flambeau!" he cried, and shook his friend by both hands again and again, much to the astonishment of that sportsman, as he came on shore with his fishing tackle. "Flambeau," he said, "so you're not killed?"

"Killed!" repeated the angler in great astonishment. "And why should I be killed?"

"Oh, because nearly everybody else is," said his companion rather wildly. "Saradine got murdered, and Antonelli wants to be hanged, and his mother's fainted, and I, for one, don't know whether I'm in this world or the next. But, thank

God, you're in the same one." And he took the bewildered Flambeau's arm.

As they turned from the landing-stage they came under the eaves of the low bamboo house, and looked in through one of the windows, as they had done on their first arrival. They beheld a lamp-lit interior well calculated to arrest their eyes. The table in the long dining-room had been laid for dinner when Saradine's destroyer had fallen like a storm-bolt on the island. And the dinner was now in placid progress, for Mrs. Anthony sat somewhat sullenly at the foot of the table, while at the head of it was Mr. Paul, the *major domo*, eating and drinking of the best, his bleared, bluish eyes standing queerly out of his face, his gaunt countenance inscrutable, but by no means devoid of satisfaction.

With a gesture of powerful impatience, Flambeau rattled at the window, wrenched it open, and put an indignant head into the lamp-lit room.

"Well," he cried. "I can understand you may need some refreshment, but really to steal your master's dinner while he lies murdered in the garden—"

"I have stolen a great many things in a long and pleasant life," replied the strange old gentleman placidly; "this dinner is one of the few things I have not stolen. This dinner and this house and garden happen to belong to me."

A thought flashed across Flambeau's face. "You mean to say," he began, "that the will of Prince Saradine—"

"I am Prince Saradine," said the old man, munching a salted almond.

Father Brown, who was looking at the birds outside, jumped as if he were shot, and put in at the window a pale face like a turnip.

"You are *what?*" he repeated in a shrill voice.

"Paul, Prince Saradine, *à vos ordres*," said the venerable person politely, lifting a glass of sherry. "I live here very quietly, being a domestic kind of fellow; and for the sake of modesty I am called Mr. Paul, to distinguish me from my



unfortunate brother Mr. Stephen. He died, I hear, recently—in the garden. Of course, it is not my fault if enemies pursue him to this place. It is owing to the regrettable irregularity of his life. He was not a domestic character.”

He relapsed into silence, and continued to gaze at the opposite wall just above the bowed and sombre head of the woman. They saw plainly the family likeness that had haunted them in the dead man. Then his old shoulders began to heave and shake a little, as if he were choking, but his face did not alter.

“My God!” cried Flambeau after a pause, “he’s laughing!”

“Come away,” said Father Brown, who was quite white. “Come away from this house of hell. Let us get into an honest boat again.”

Night had sunk on rushes and river by the time they had pushed off from the island, and they went down-stream in the dark, warming themselves with two big cigars that glowed like crimson ships’ lanterns. Father Brown took his cigar out of his mouth and said:

“I suppose you can guess the whole story now? After all, it’s a primitive story. A man had two enemies. He was a wise man. And so he discovered that two enemies are better than one.”

“I do not follow that,” answered Flambeau.

“Oh, it’s really simple,” rejoined his friend. “Simple, though anything but innocent. Both the Saradines were scamps, but the prince, the elder, was the sort of scamp that gets to the top, and the younger, the captain, was the sort that sinks to the bottom. This squalid officer fell from beggar to blackmailer, and one ugly day he got his hold upon his brother, the prince. Obviously it was for no light matter, for Prince Paul Saradine was frankly ‘fast,’ and had no reputation to lose as to the mere sins of society. In plain fact, it was a hanging matter, and Stephen literally had a rope round his brother’s neck. He had somehow discovered the truth about the Sicilian affair, and could prove that Paul

murdered old Antonelli in the mountains. The captain raked in the hush money heavily for ten years, until even the prince's splendid fortune began to look a little foolish.

"But Prince Saradine bore another burden besides his bloodsucking brother. He knew that the son of Antonelli, a mere child at the time of the murder, had been trained in savage Sicilian loyalty, and lived only to avenge his father, not with the gibbet (for he lacked Stephen's legal proof), but with the old weapons of vendetta. The boy had practised arms with a deadly perfection, and about the time that he was old enough to use them Prince Saradine began, as the society papers said, to travel. The fact is that he began to flee for his life, passing from place to place like a hunted criminal; but with one relentless man upon his trail. That was Prince Paul's position, and by no means a pretty one. The more money he spent on eluding Antonelli the less he had to silence Stephen. The more he gave to silence Stephen the less chance there was of finally escaping Antonelli. Then it was that he showed himself a great man—a genius like Napoleon.

"Instead of resisting his two antagonists, he surrendered suddenly to both of them. He gave way like a Japanese wrestler, and his foes fell prostrate before him. He gave up the race round the world, and he gave up his address to young Antonelli; then he gave up everything to his brother. He sent Stephen money enough for smart clothes and easy travel, with a letter saying roughly: 'This is all I have left. You have cleaned me out. I still have a little house in Norfolk, with servants and a cellar, and if you want more from me you must take that. Come and take possession if you like, and I will live there quietly as your friend or agent or anything.' He knew that the Sicilian had never seen the Saradine brothers save, perhaps, in pictures; he knew they were somewhat alike, both having grey, pointed beards. Then he shaved his own face and waited. The trap worked. The unhappy captain, in his new clothes, entered the house

in triumph as a prince, and walked upon the Sicilian's sword.

"There was one hitch, and it is to the honour of human nature. Evil spirits like Saradine often blunder by never expecting the virtues of mankind. He took it for granted that the Italian's blow, when it came, would be dark, violent and nameless, like the blow it avenged; that the victim would be knifed at night, or shot from behind a hedge, and so die without speech. It was a bad minute for Prince Paul when Antonelli's chivalry proposed a formal duel, with all its possible explanations. It was then that I found him putting off in his boat with wild eyes. He was fleeing, bareheaded, in an open boat before Antonelli should learn who he was.

"But, however agitated, he was not hopeless. He knew the adventurer and he knew the fanatic. It was quite probable that Stephen, the adventurer, would hold his tongue, through his mere histrionic pleasure in playing a part, his lust for clinging to his new cosy quarters, his rascal's trust in luck, and his fine fencing. It was certain that Antonelli, the fanatic, would hold his tongue, and be hanged without telling tales of his family. Paul hung about on the river till he knew the fight was over. Then he roused the town, brought the police, saw his two vanquished enemies taken away forever, and sat down smiling to his dinner."

"Laughing, God help us!" said Flambeau with a strong shudder. "Do they get such ideas from Satan?"

"He got that idea from you," answered the priest.

"God forbid!" ejaculated Flambeau. "From me? What do you mean?"

The priest pulled a visiting-card from his pocket and held it up in the faint glow of his cigar; it was scrawled with green ink.

"Don't you remember his original invitation to you?" he asked, "and the compliment to your criminal exploit? 'That trick of yours,' he says, 'of getting one detective to arrest the other'? He has just copied your trick. With an enemy on each

side of him, he slipped swiftly out of the way and let them collide and kill each other."

Flambeau tore Prince Saradine's card from the priest's hands and rent it savagely in small pieces.

"There's the last of that old skull and crossbones," he said as he scattered the pieces upon the dark and disappearing waves of the stream; "but I should think it would poison the fishes."

The last gleam of white card and green ink was drowned and darkened; a faint and vibrant colour as of morning changed the sky, and the moon behind the grasses grew paler. They drifted in silence.

"Father," said Flambeau suddenly, "do you think it was all a dream?"

The priest shook his head, whether in dissent or agnosticism, but remained mute. A smell of hawthorn and of orchards came to them through the darkness, telling them that a wind was awake; the next moment it swayed their little boat and swelled their sail, and carried them onward down the winding river to happier places and the homes of harmless men.

# *The Gioconda Smile*

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A L D O U S   H U X L E Y

## I

“MISS SPENCE will be down directly, sir.”  
“Thank you,” said Mr. Hutton, without turning round. Janet Spence’s parlourmaid was so ugly—ugly on purpose, it always seemed to him, malignantly, criminally ugly—that he could not bear to look at her more than was necessary. The door closed. Left to himself, Mr. Hutton got up and began to wander round the room, looking with meditative eyes at the familiar objects it contained.

Photographs of Greek statuary, photographs of the Roman Forum, coloured prints of Italian masterpieces, all very safe and well known. Poor, dear Janet, what a prig—what an intellectual snob! Her real taste was illustrated in that water-colour by the pavement artist, the one she had paid half a crown for (and thirty-five shillings for the frame). How often he had heard her tell the story, how often expatiated on the beauties of that skilful imitation of an oleograph! “A real Artist in the streets,” and you could hear the capital A in Artist as she spoke the words. She made you feel that part of his glory had entered into Janet Spence when she tendered him that half-crown for the copy of the oleograph. She was implying a compliment to her own taste and penetration. A genuine Old Master for half a crown. Poor, dear Janet!

Mr. Hutton came to a pause in front of a small oblong

mirror. Stooping a little to get a full view of his face, he passed a white, well-manicured finger over his moustache. It was as curly, as freshly auburn as it had been twenty years ago. His hair still retained its colour, and there was no sign of baldness yet—only a certain elevation of the brow. “Shakespearean,” thought Mr. Hutton, with a smile, as he surveyed the smooth and polished expanse of his forehead.

Others abide our question, thou art free. . . . Footsteps in the sea . . . Majesty. . . . Shakespeare, thou shouldst be living at this hour. No, that was Milton, wasn’t it? Milton, the Lady of Christ’s. There was no lady about him. He was what the women would call a manly man. That was why they liked him—for the curly auburn moustache and the discreet redolence of tobacco. Mr. Hutton smiled again; he enjoyed making fun of himself. Lady of Christ’s? No, no. He was the Christ of Ladies. Very pretty, very pretty. The Christ of Ladies. Mr. Hutton wished there were somebody he could tell the joke to. Poor, dear Janet wouldn’t appreciate it, alas!

He straightened himself up, parted his hair, and resumed his peregrination. Damn the Roman Forum; he hated those dreary photographs.

Suddenly he became aware that Janet Spence was in the room, standing near the door. Mr. Hutton started, as though he had been taken in some felonious act. To make these silent and spectral appearances was one of Janet Spence’s peculiar talents. Perhaps she had been there all the time, and seen him looking at himself in the mirror. Impossible! But, still, it was disquieting.

“Oh, you gave me such a surprise,” said Mr. Hutton, recovering his smile and advancing with outstretched hand to meet her.

Miss Spence was smiling too: her Gioconda smile, he had once called it in a moment of half-ironical flattery. Miss Spence had taken the compliment seriously, and always tried to live up to the Leonardo standard. She smiled on in

silence while Mr. Hutton shook hands; that was part of the Gioconda business.

"I hope you're well," said Mr. Hutton. "You look it."

What a queer face she had! That small mouth pursed forward by the Gioconda expression into a little snout with a round hole in the middle as though for whistling—it was like a penholder seen from the front. Above the mouth a well-shaped nose, finely aquiline. Eyes large, lustrous, and dark, with the largeness, lustre, and darkness that seems to invite sties and an occasional bloodshot suffusion. They were fine eyes, but unchangingly grave. The penholder might do its Gioconda trick, but the eyes never altered in their earnestness. Above them, a pair of boldly arched, heavily pencilled black eyebrows lent a surprising air of power, as of a Roman matron, to the upper portion of the face. Her hair was dark and equally Roman; Agrippina from the brows upwards.

"I thought I'd just look in on my way home," Mr. Hutton went on. "Ah, it's good to be back here"—he indicated with a wave of his hand the flowers in the vases, the sunshine and greenery beyond the windows—"it's good to be back in the country after a stuffy day of business in town."

Miss Spence, who had sat down, pointed to a chair at her side.

"No, really, I can't sit down," Mr. Hutton protested. "I must get back to see how poor Emily is. She was rather seedy this morning." He sat down, nevertheless. "It's these wretched liver chills. She's always getting them. Women——" He broke off and coughed, so as to hide the fact that he had uttered. He was about to say that women with weak digestions ought not to marry; but the remark was too cruel, and he didn't really believe it. Janet Spence, moreover, was a believer in eternal flames and spiritual attachments. "She hopes to be well enough," he added, "to see you at luncheon to-morrow. Can you come? Do?" He smiled persuasively. "It's my invitation too, you know."

She dropped her eyes, and Mr. Hutton almost thought

that he detected a certain reddening of the cheek. It was a tribute; he stroked his moustache.

"I should like to come if you think Emily's really well enough to have a visitor."

"Of course. You'll do her good. You'll do us both good. In married life three is often better company than two."

"Oh, you're cynical."

Mr. Hutton always had a desire to say "Bow-wow-wow" whenever that last word was spoken. It irritated him more than any other word in the language. But instead of barking he made haste to protest.

"No, no. I'm only speaking a melancholy truth. Reality doesn't always come up to the ideal, you know. But that doesn't make me believe any the less in the ideal. Indeed, I believe in it passionately—the ideal of a matrimony between two people in perfect accord. I think it's realisable. I'm sure it is."

He paused significantly and looked at her with an arch expression. A virgin of thirty-six, but still unwithered; she had her charms. And there was something really rather enigmatic about her. Miss Spence made no reply, but continued to smile. There were times when Mr. Hutton got rather bored with the Gioconda. He stood up.

"I must really be going now. Farewell, mysterious Gioconda." The smile grew intenser, focused itself, as it were, in a narrower snout. Mr. Hutton made a Cinquecento gesture, and kissed her extended hand. It was the first time he had done such a thing; the action seemed not to be resented. "I look forward to to-morrow."

"Do you?"

For answer Mr. Hutton once more kissed her hand, then turned to go. Miss Spence accompanied him to the porch.

"Where's your car?" she asked.

"I left it at the gate of the drive."

"I'll come and see you off."



"No, no." Mr. Hutton was playful, but determined. "You must do no such thing. I simply forbid you."

"But I should like to come," Miss Spence protested, throwing a rapid *Gioconda* at him.

Mr. Hutton held up his hand. "No," he repeated, and then, with a gesture that was almost the blowing of a kiss, he started to run down the drive, lightly, on his toes, with long, bounding strides like a boy's. He was proud of that run; it was quite marvellously youthful. Still, he was glad the drive was no longer. At the last bend, before passing out of sight of the house, he halted and turned round. Miss Spence was still standing on the steps, smiling her smile. He waved his hand, and this time quite definitely and overtly wafted a kiss in her direction. Then, breaking once more into his magnificent canter, he rounded the last dark promontory of trees. Once out of sight of the house he let his high paces decline to a trot, and finally to a walk. He took out his handkerchief and began wiping his neck inside his collar. What fools, what fools! Had there ever been such an ass as poor, dear Janet Spence? Never, unless it was himself. Decidedly he was the more malignant fool, since he, at least, was aware of his folly and still persisted in it. Why did he persist? Ah, the problem that was himself, the problem that was other people . . .

He had reached the gate. A large, prosperous-looking motor was standing at the side of the road.

"Home, M'Nab." The chauffeur touched his cap. "And stop at the cross-roads on the way, as usual," Mr. Hutton added, as he opened the door of the car. "Well?" he said, speaking into the obscurity that lurked within.

"Oh, Teddy Bear, what an age you've been!" It was a fresh and childish voice that spoke the words. There was the faintest hint of Cockney impurity about the vowel sounds.

Mr. Hutton bent his large form and darted into the car with the agility of an animal regaining his burrow.

"Have I?" he said, as he shut the door. The machine began

to move. "You must have missed me a lot if you found the time so long." He sat back in the low seat; a cherishing warmth enveloped him.

"Teddy Bear . . ." and with a sigh of contentment a charming little head declined on to Mr. Hutton's shoulder. Ravished, he looked down sideways at the round, babyish face.

"Do you know, Doris, you look like the pictures of Louise de Kerouaille." He passed his fingers through a mass of curly hair.

"Who's Louise de Kera-whatever-it-is?" Doris spoke from remote distances.

"She was, alas! *Fuit*. We shall all be 'was' one of these days. Meanwhile . . ."

Mr. Hutton covered the babyish face with kisses. The car rushed smoothly along. M'Nab's back through the front window, was stonily impassive, the back of a statue.

"Your hands," Doris whispered. "Oh, you mustn't touch me. They give me electric shocks."

Mr. Hutton adored her for the virgin imbecility of the words. How late in one's existence one makes the discovery of one's body!

"The electricity isn't in me, it's in you." He kissed her again, whispering her name several times: Doris, Doris, Doris. The scientific appellation of the sea-mouse, he was thinking as he kissed the throat she offered him, white and extended like the throat of a victim awaiting the sacrificial knife. The sea-mouse was a sausage with iridescent fur: very peculiar. Or was Doris the sea-cucumber, which turns itself inside out in moments of alarm? He would really have to go to Naples again, just to see the aquarium. These sea creatures were fabulous, unbelievably fantastic.

"Oh, Teddy Bear!" (More zoology; but he was only a land animal. His poor little jokes!) "Teddy Bear, I'm so happy."

"So am I?" said Mr. Hutton. Was it true?

"But I wish I knew if it were right. Tell me, Teddy Bear, is it right or wrong?"

"Ah, my dear, that's just what I've been wondering for the last thirty years."

"Be serious, Teddy Bear. I want to know if this is right; if it's right that I should be here with you and that we should love one another, and that it should give me electric shocks when you touch me."

"Right? Well, it's certainly good that you should have electric shocks rather than sexual repressions. Read Freud; repressions are the devil."

"Oh, you don't help me. Why aren't you ever serious? If only you knew how miserable I am sometimes, thinking it's not right. Perhaps, you know, there is a hell, and all that. I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think I ought to stop loving you."

"But could you?" asked Mr. Hutton, confident in the powers of his seduction and his moustache.

"No, Teddy Bear, you know I couldn't. But I could run away, I could hide from you, I could lock myself up and force myself not to come to you."

"Silly little thing!" He tightened his embrace.

"Oh, dear. I hope it isn't wrong. And there are times when I don't care if it is."

Mr. Hutton was touched. He had a certain protective affection for this little creature. He laid his cheek against her hair and so, interlaced, they sat in silence, while the car, swaying and pitching a little as it hastened along, seemed to draw in the white road and the dusty hedges towards it devouringly.

"Good-bye, good-bye."

The car moved on, gathered speed, vanished round a curve, and Doris was left standing by the sign-post at the cross-roads, still dizzy and weak with the languor born of those kisses and the electrical touch of those gentle hands.

She had to take a deep breath, to draw herself up deliberately, before she was strong enough to start her homeward walk. She had half a mile in which to invent the necessary lies.

Alone, Mr. Hutton suddenly found himself the prey of an appalling boredom.

## II

Mrs. Hutton was lying on the sofa in her boudoir, playing Patience. In spite of the warmth of the July evening a wood fire was burning on the hearth. A black Pomeranian, extenuated by the heat and the fatigues of digestion, slept before the blaze.

"Phew! Isn't it rather hot in here?" Mr. Hutton asked as he entered the room.

"You know I have to keep warm, dear." The voice seemed breaking on the verge of tears. "I get so shivery."

"I hope you're better this evening."

"Not much, I'm afraid."

The conversation stagnated. Mr. Hutton stood leaning his back against the mantelpiece. He looked down at the Pomeranian lying at his feet, and with the toe of his right boot he rolled the little dog over and rubbed its white-flecked chest and belly. The creature lay in an inert ecstasy. Mrs. Hutton continued to play Patience. Arrived at an *impasse*, she altered the position of one card, took back another, and went on playing. Her Patiences always came out.

"Dr. Libbard thinks I ought to go to Llandrindod Wells this summer."

"Well, go, my dear—go, most certainly."

Mr. Hutton was thinking of the events of the afternoon: how they had driven, Doris and he, up to the hanging wood, had left the car to wait for them under the shade of the trees, and walked together out into the windless sunshine of the chalk down.

"I'm to drink the waters for my liver, and he thinks I ought to have massage and electric treatment, too."

Hat in hand, Doris had stalked four blue butterflies that were dancing together round a scabious flower with a motion that was like the flickering of blue fire. The blue fire burst and scattered into whirling sparks; she had given chase, laughing and shouting like a child.

"I'm sure it will do you good, my dear."

"I was wondering if you'd come with me, dear."

"But you know I'm going to Scotland at the end of the month."

Mrs. Hutton looked up at him entreatingly. "It's the journey," she said. "The thought of it is such a nightmare. I don't know if I can manage it. And you know I can't sleep in hotels. And then there's the luggage and all the worries. I can't go alone."

"But you won't be alone. You'll have your maid with you." He spoke impatiently. The sick woman was usurping the place of the healthy one. He was being dragged back from the memory of the sunlit down and the quick, laughing girl, back to this unhealthy, overheated room and its complaining occupant.

"I don't think I shall be able to go."

"But you must, my dear, if the doctor tells you to. And, besides, a change will do you good."

"I don't think so."

"But Libbard thinks so, and he knows what he's talking about."

"No, I can't face it. I'm too weak. I can't go alone." Mrs. Hutton pulled a handkerchief out of her black silk bag, and put it to her eyes.

"Nonsense, my dear, you must make the effort."

"I had rather be left in peace to die here." She was crying in earnest now.

"O Lord! Now do be reasonable. Listen now, please." Mrs. Hutton only sobbed more violently. "Oh, what is one to do?"

He shrugged his shoulders and walked out of the room.

Mr. Hutton was aware that he had not behaved with proper patience; but he could not help it. Very early in his manhood he had discovered that not only did he not feel sympathy for the poor, the weak, the diseased, and deformed; he actually hated them. Once, as an undergraduate, he spent three days at a mission in the East End. He had returned, filled with a profound and ineradicable disgust. Instead of pitying, he loathed the unfortunate. It was not, he knew, a very comely emotion, and he had been ashamed of it at first. In the end he had decided that it was temperamental, inevitable, and had felt no further qualms. Emily had been healthy and beautiful when he married her. He had loved her then. But now—was it his fault that she was like this?

Mr. Hutton dined alone. Food and drink left him more benevolent than he had been before dinner. To make amends for his show of exasperation he went up to his wife's room and offered to read to her. She was touched, gratefully accepted the offer, and Mr. Hutton, who was particularly proud of his accent, suggested a little light reading in French.

"French? I am so fond of French." Mrs. Hutton spoke of the language of Racine as though it were a dish of green peas.

Mr. Hutton ran down to the library and returned with a yellow volume. He began reading. The effort of pronouncing perfectly absorbed his whole attention. But how good his accent was! The fact of its goodness seemed to improve the quality of the novel he was reading.

At the end of fifteen pages an unmistakable sound aroused him. He looked up; Mrs. Hutton had gone to sleep. He sat still for a little while, looking with a dispassionate curiosity at the sleeping face. Once it had been beautiful; once, long ago, the sight of it, the recollection of it, had moved him with an emotion profounder, perhaps, than any he had felt before or since. Now it was lined and cadaverous. The skin

was stretched tightly over the cheekbones, across the bridge of the sharp, bird-like nose. The closed eyes were set in profound bone-rimmed sockets. The lamplight striking on the face from the side emphasised with light and shade its cavities and projections. It was the face of a dead Christ by Morales.

*Le squelette était invisible  
Au temps heureux de l'art païen.*

He shivered a little, and tiptoed out of the room.

On the following day Mrs. Hutton came down to luncheon. She had had some unpleasant palpitations during the night, but she was feeling better now. Besides, she wanted to do honour to her guest. Miss Spence listened to her complaints about Llandrindod Wells, and was loud in sympathy, lavish with advice. Whatever she said was always said with intensity. She leaned forward, aimed, so to speak, like a gun, and fired her words. Bang! the charge in her soul was ignited, the words whizzed forth at the narrow barrel of her mouth. She was a machine-gun riddling her hostess with sympathy. Mr. Hutton had undergone similar bombardments, mostly of a literary or philosophic character—bombardments of Maeterlinck, or Mrs. Besant, of Bergson, of William James. To-day the missiles were medical. She talked about insomnia, she expatiated on the virtues of harmless drugs and beneficent specialists. Under the bombardment Mrs. Hutton opened out, like a flower in the sun.

Mr. Hutton looked on in silence. The spectacle of Janet Spence evoked in him an unfailing curiosity. He was not romantic enough to imagine that every face masked an interior physiognomy of beauty or strangeness, that every woman's small talk was like a vapour hanging over mysterious gulfs. His wife, for example, and Doris; they were nothing more than what they seemed to be. But with Janet Spence it was somehow different. Here one could be sure that there was some kind of a queer face behind the Gio-

conda smile and the Roman eyebrows. The only question was: What exactly was there? Mr. Hutton could never quite make out.

"But perhaps you won't have to go to Llandrindod after all," Miss Spence was saying. "If you get well quickly Dr. Libbard will let you off."

"I only hope so. Indeed, I do really feel rather better to-day."

Mr. Hutton felt ashamed. How much was it his own lack of sympathy that prevented her from feeling well every day? But he comforted himself by reflecting that it was only a case of feeling, not of being better. Sympathy does not mend a diseased liver or a weak heart.

"My dear, I wouldn't eat those red currants if I were you," he said, suddenly solicitous. "You know that Libbard has banned everything with skins and pips."

"But I am so fond of them," Mrs. Hutton protested, "and I feel so well to-day."

"Don't be a tyrant," said Miss Spence, looking first at him and then at his wife. "Let the poor invalid have what she fancies; it will do her good." She laid her hand on Mrs. Hutton's arm and patted it affectionately two or three times.

"Thank you, my dear." Mrs. Hutton helped herself to the stewed currants.

"Well, don't blame me if they make you ill again."

"Do I ever blame you, dear?"

"You have nothing to blame me for," Mr. Hutton answered playfully. "I am the perfect husband."

They sat in the garden after luncheon. From the island of shade under the old cypress tree they looked out across a flat expanse of lawn, in which the parterres of flowers shone with a metallic brilliance.

Mr. Hutton took a deep breath of the warm and fragrant air. "It's good to be alive," he said.

"Just to be alive," his wife echoed, stretching one pale, knot-jointed hand into the sunlight.



A maid brought the coffee; the silver pots and the little blue cups were set on a folding table near the group of chairs.

"Oh, my medicine!" exclaimed Mrs. Hutton. "Run in and fetch it, Clara, will you? The white bottle on the sideboard."

"I'll go," said Mr. Hutton. "I've got to go and fetch a cigar in any case."

He ran in towards the house. On the threshold he turned round for an instant. The maid was walking back across the lawn. His wife was sitting up in her deck-chair, engaged in opening her white parasol. Miss Spence was bending over the table, pouring out the coffee. He passed into the cool obscurity of the house.

"Do you like sugar in your coffee?" Miss Spence inquired.

"Yes, please. Give me rather a lot. I'll drink it after my medicine to take the taste away."

Mrs. Hutton leaned back in her chair, lowering the sunshade over her eyes, so as to shut out from her vision the burning sky.

Behind her, Miss Spence was making a delicate clinking among the coffee-cups.

"I've given you three large spoonfuls. That ought to take the taste away. And here comes the medicine."

Mr. Hutton had reappeared, carrying a wine-glass, half full of a pale liquid.

"It smells delicious," he said, as he handed it to his wife.

"That's only the flavouring." She drank it off at a gulp, shuddered, and made a grimace. "Ugh, it's so nasty. Give me my coffee."

Miss Spence gave her the cup; she sipped at it. "You've made it like syrup. But it's very nice, after that atrocious medicine."

At half-past three Mrs. Hutton complained that she did not feel as well as she had done, and went indoors to lie down. Her husband would have said something about the red currants, but checked himself; the triumph of an "I told you

so" was too cheaply won. Instead, he was sympathetic, and gave her his arm to the house.

"A rest will do you good," he said. "By the way, I shan't be back till after dinner."

"But why? Where are you going?"

"I promised to go to Johnson's this evening. We have to discuss the war memorial, you know."

"Oh, I wish you weren't going," Mrs. Hutton was almost in tears. "Can't you stay? I don't like being alone in the house."

"But, my dear, I promised—weeks ago." It was a bother having to lie like this. "And now I must get back and look after Miss Spence."

He kissed her on the forehead and went out again into the garden. Miss Spence received him aimed and intense.

"Your wife is dreadfully ill," she fired off at him.

"I thought she cheered up so much when you came."

"That was purely nervous, purely nervous. I was watching her closely. With a heart in that condition and her digestion wrecked—yes, wrecked—anything might happen."

"Libbard doesn't take so gloomy a view of poor Emily's health." Mr. Hutton held open the gate that led from the garden into the drive; Miss Spence's car was standing by the front door.

"Libbard is only a country doctor. You ought to see a specialist."

He could not refrain from laughing. "You have a macabre passion for specialists."

Miss Spence held up her hand in protest. "I am serious. I think poor Emily is in a very bad state. Anything might happen—at any moment."

He handed her into the car and shut the door. The chauffeur started the engine and climbed into his place, ready to drive off.

"Shall I tell him to start?" He had no desire to continue the conversation.

Miss Spence leaned forward and shot a Gioconda in his direction. "Remember, I expect you to come and see me again soon."

Mechanically he grinned, made a polite noise, and, as the car moved forward, waved his hand. He was happy to be alone.

A few minutes afterwards Mr. Hutton himself drove away. Doris was waiting at the cross-roads. They dined together twenty miles from home, at a roadside hotel. It was one of those bad, expensive meals which are only cooked in country hotels frequented by motorists. It revolted Mr. Hutton, but Doris enjoyed it. She always enjoyed things. Mr. Hutton ordered a not very good brand of champagne. He was wishing he had spent the evening in his library.

When they started homewards Doris was a little tipsy and extremely affectionate. It was very dark inside the car, but looking forward, past the motionless form of M'Nab, they could see a bright and narrow universe of forms and colours scooped out of the night by the electric head-lamps.

It was after eleven when Mr. Hutton reached home. Dr. Libbard met him in the hall. He was a small man with delicate hands and well-formed features that were almost feminine. His brown eyes were large and melancholy. He used to waste a great deal of time sitting at the bedside of his patients, looking sadness through those eyes and talking in a sad, low voice about nothing in particular. His person exhaled a pleasing odour, decidedly antiseptic but at the same time suave and discreetly delicious.

"Libbard?" said Mr. Hutton in surprise. "You here? Is my wife ill?"

"We tried to fetch you earlier," the soft, melancholy voice replied. "It was thought you were at Mr. Johnson's, but they had no news of you there."

"No, I was detained. I had a breakdown," Mr. Hutton answered irritably. It was tiresome to be caught out in a lie.

"Your wife wanted to see you urgently."

"Well, I can go now." Mr. Hutton moved towards the stairs.

Dr. Libbard laid a hand on his arm. "I am afraid it's too late."

"Too late?" He began fumbling with his watch; it wouldn't come out of the pocket.

"Mrs. Hutton passed away half an hour ago."

The voice remained even in its softness, the melancholy of the eyes did not deepen. Dr. Libbard spoke of death as he would speak of a local cricket match. All things were equally vain and equally deplorable.

Mr. Hutton found himself thinking of Janet Spence's words. At any moment—at any moment. She had been extraordinarily right.

"What happened?" he asked. "What was the cause?"

Dr. Libbard explained. It was heart failure brought on by a violent attack of nausea, caused in its turn by the eating of something of an irritant nature. Red currants? Mr. Hutton suggested. Very likely. It had been too much for the heart. There was chronic valvular disease: something had collapsed under the strain. It was all over; she could not have suffered much.

### III

"It's a pity they should have chosen the day of the Eton and Harrow match for the funeral," old General Grego was saying as he stood, his top hat in his hand, under the shadow of the lych gate, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

Mr. Hutton overheard the remark and with difficulty restrained a desire to inflict grievous bodily pain on the General. He would have liked to hit the old brute in the middle of his big red face. Monstrous great mulberry, spotted with meall! Was there no respect for the dead? Did nobody care? In theory he didn't much care; let the dead bury their dead.

But here, at the graveside, he had found himself actually sobbing. Poor Emily, they had been pretty happy once. Now she was lying at the bottom of a seven-foot hole. And here was Grego complaining that he couldn't go to the Eton and Harrow match.

Mr. Hutton looked round at the groups of black figures that were drifting slowly out of the churchyard towards the fleet of cabs and motors assembled in the road outside. Against the brilliant background of the July grass and flowers and foliage, they had a horribly alien and unnatural appearance. It pleased him to think that all these people would soon be dead too.

That evening Mr. Hutton sat up late in his library reading the life of Milton. There was no particular reason why he should have chosen Milton; it was the book that first came to hand, that was all. It was after midnight when he had finished. He got up from his armchair, unbolted the French windows, and stepped out on to the little paved terrace. The night was quiet and clear. Mr. Hutton looked at the stars and at the holes between them, dropped his eyes to the dim lawns and hueless flowers of the garden, and let them wander over the farther landscape, black and grey under the moon.

He began to think with a kind of confused violence. There were the stars, there was Milton. A man can be somehow the peer of stars and night. Greatness, nobility. But is there seriously a difference between the noble and the ignoble? Milton, the stars, death, and himself—himself. The soul, the body; the higher and the lower nature. Perhaps there was something in it, after all. Milton had a god on his side and righteousness. What had he? Nothing, nothing whatever. There were only Doris's little breasts. What was the point of it all? Milton, the stars, death, and Emily in her grave, Doris and himself—always himself . . .

Oh, he was a futile and disgusting being. Everything convinced him of it. It was a solemn moment. He spoke aloud: "I will, I will." The sound of his own voice in the darkness

was appalling; it seemed to him that he had sworn that infernal oath which binds even the gods: "I will, I will." There had been New Year's days and solemn anniversaries in the past, when he had felt the same contritions and recorded similar resolutions. They had all thinned away, these resolutions, like smoke, into nothingness. But this was a greater moment and he had pronounced a more fearful oath. In the future it was to be different. Yes, he would live by reason, he would be industrious, he would curb his appetites, he would devote his life to some good purpose. It was resolved and it would be so.

In practice he saw himself spending his mornings in agricultural pursuits, riding round with the bailiff, seeing that his land was farmed in the best modern way—silos and artificial manures and continuous cropping, and all that. The remainder of the day should be devoted to serious study. There was that book he had been intending to write for so long—*The Effect of Diseases on Civilisation*.

Mr. Hutton went to bed humble and contrite, but with a sense that grace had entered into him. He slept for seven and a half hours, and woke to find the sun brilliantly shining. The emotions of the evening before had been transformed by a good night's rest into his customary cheerfulness. It was not until a good many seconds after his return to conscious life that he remembered his resolution, his Stygian oath. Milton and death seemed somehow different in the sunlight. As for the stars, they were not there. But the resolutions were good; even in the daytime he could see that. He had his horse saddled after breakfast, and rode round the farm with the bailiff. After luncheon he read Thucydides on the plague at Athens. In the evening he made a few notes on malaria in Southern Italy. While he was undressing he remembered that there was a good anecdote in Skelton's jest-book about the Sweating Sickness. He would have made a note of it if only he could have found a pencil.

On the sixth morning of his new life Mr. Hutton found

among his correspondence an envelope addressed in that peculiarly vulgar handwriting which he knew to be Doris's. He opened it, and began to read. She didn't know what to say, words were so inadequate. His wife dying like that, and so suddenly—it was too terrible. Mr. Hutton sighed, but his interest revived somewhat as he read on:

*"Death is so frightening, I never think of it when I can help it. But when something like this happens, or when I am feeling ill or depressed, then I can't help remembering it is there so close, and I think about all the wicked things I have done and about you and me, and I wonder what will happen, and I am so frightened. I am so lonely, Teddy Bear, and so unhappy, and I don't know what to do. I can't get rid of the idea of dying, I am so wretched and helpless without you. I didn't mean to write to you; I meant to wait till you were out of mourning and could come and see me again, but I was so lonely and miserable, Teddy Bear, I had to write. I couldn't help it. Forgive me, I want you so much; I have nobody in the world but you. You are so good and gentle and understanding; there is nobody like you. I shall never forget how good and kind you have been to me, and you are so clever and know so much, I can't understand how you ever came to pay any attention to me, I am so dull and stupid, much less like me and love me, because you do love me a little, don't you, Teddy Bear?"*

Mr. Hutton was touched with shame and remorse. To be thanked like this, worshipped for having seduced the girl—it was too much. It had just been a piece of imbecile wantonness. Imbecile, idiotic: there was no other way to describe it. For, when all was said, he had derived very little pleasure from it. Taking all things together, he had probably been more bored than amused. Once upon a time he had believed himself to be a hedonist. But to be a hedonist implies a certain process of reasoning, a deliberate choice of known pleasures, a rejection of known pains. This had been done without reason, against it. For he knew beforehand—so well, so well—that there was no interest or pleasure to be derived from these wretched affairs. And yet each time the vague itch came upon him he succumbed, involving himself once

more in the old stupidity. There had been Maggie, his wife's maid, and Edith, the girl on the farm, and Mrs. Pringle, and the waitress in London, and others—there seemed to be dozens of them. It had all been so stale and boring. He knew it would be; he always knew. And yet, and yet . . . Experience doesn't teach.

Poor little Doris! He would write to her kindly, comfortingly, but he wouldn't see her again. A servant came to tell him that his horse was saddled and waiting. He mounted and rode off. That morning the old bailiff was more irritating than usual.

Five days later Doris and Mr. Hutton were sitting together on the pier at Southend; Doris, in white muslin with pink garnishings, radiated happiness; Mr. Hutton, legs outstretched and chair tilted, had pushed the panama back from his forehead, and was trying to feel like a tripper. That night, when Doris was asleep, breathing and warm by his side, he recaptured, in this moment of darkness and physical fatigue, the rather cosmic emotion which had possessed him that evening, not a fortnight ago, when he had made his great resolution. And so his solemn oath had already gone the way of so many other resolutions. Unreason had triumphed; at the first itch of desire he had given way. He was hopeless, hopeless.

For a long time he lay with closed eyes, ruminating his humiliation. The girl stirred in her sleep. Mr. Hutton turned over and looked in her direction. Enough faint light crept in between the half-drawn curtains to show her bare arm and shoulder, her neck, and the dark tangle of hair on the pillow. She was beautiful, desirable. Why did he lie there moaning over his sins? What did it matter? If he were hopeless, then so be it; he would make the best of his hopelessness. A glorious sense of irresponsibility suddenly filled him. He was free, magnificently free. In a kind of exaltation he drew the girl towards him. She woke, bewildered, almost frightened under his rough kisses.



The storm of his desire subsided into a kind of serene merriment. The whole atmosphere seemed to be quivering with enormous silent laughter.

"Could anyone love you as much as I do, Teddy Bear?" The question came faintly from distant worlds of love.

"I think I know somebody who does," Mr. Hutton replied. The submarine laughter was swelling, rising, ready to break the surface of silence and resound.

"Who? Tell me. What do you mean?" The voice had come very close; charged with suspicion, anguish, indignation, it belonged to this immediate world.

"A—ah!"

"Who?"

"You'll never guess." Mr. Hutton kept up the joke until it began to grow tedious, and then pronounced the name: "Janet Spence."

Doris was incredulous. "Miss Spence of the Manor? That old woman?" It was too ridiculous. Mr. Hutton laughed too.

"But it's quite true," he said. "She adores me." Oh, the vast joke! He would go and see her as soon as he returned—see and conquer. "I believe she wants to marry me," he added.

"But you wouldn't . . . you don't intend . . ."

The air was fairly crepitating with humour. Mr. Hutton laughed aloud. "I intend to marry you," he said. It seemed to him the best joke he had ever made in his life.

When Mr. Hutton left Southend he was once more a married man. It was agreed that, for the time being, the fact should be kept secret. In the autumn they would go abroad together, and the world should be informed. Meanwhile he was to go back to his own house and Doris to hers.

The day after his return he walked over in the afternoon to see Miss Spence. She received him with the old Gioconda.

"I was expecting you to come."

"I couldn't keep away," Mr. Hutton gallantly replied.

They sat in the summer-house. It was a pleasant place—a little old stucco temple bowered among dense bushes of

evergreen. Miss Spence had left her mark on it by hanging up over the seat a blue-and-white Della Robbia plaque.

"I am thinking of going to Italy this autumn," said Mr. Hutton. He felt like a ginger-beer bottle, ready to pop with bubbling humorous excitement.

"Italy. . . ." Miss Spence closed her eyes ecstatically. "I feel drawn there too."

"Why not let yourself be drawn?"

"I don't know. One somehow hasn't the energy and initiative to set out alone."

"Alone. . . ." Ah, sound of guitars and throaty singing! "Yes, travelling alone isn't much fun."

Miss Spence lay back in her chair without speaking. Her eyes were still closed. Mr. Hutton stroked his moustache. The silence prolonged itself for what seemed a very long time.

Pressed to stay to dinner, Mr. Hutton did not refuse. The fun had hardly started. The table was laid in the loggia. Through its arches they looked out on to the sloping garden, to the valley below and the farther hills. Light ebbed away; the heat and silence were oppressive. A huge cloud was mounting up the sky, and there were distant breathings of thunder. The thunder drew nearer, a wind began to blow, and the first drops of rain fell. The table was cleared. Miss Spence and Mr. Hutton sat on in the growing darkness.

Miss Spence broke a long silence by saying meditatively:

"I think everyone has a right to a certain amount of happiness, don't you?"

"Most certainly." But what was she leading up to? Nobody makes generalisations about life unless they mean to talk about themselves. Happiness: he looked back on his own life, and saw a cheerful, placid existence disturbed by no great griefs or discomforts or alarms. He had always had money and freedom; he had been able to do very much as he wanted. Yes, he supposed he had been happy—happier than most men. And now he was not merely happy; he had dis-

covered in irresponsibility the secret of gaiety. He was about to say something about his happiness when Miss Spence went on speaking.

"People like you and me have a right to be happy some time in our lives."

"Me?" said Mr. Hutton, surprised.

"Poor Henry! Fate hasn't treated either of us very well."

"Oh, well, it might have treated me worse."

"You're being cheerful. That's brave of you. But don't think I can't see behind the mask."

Miss Spence spoke louder and louder as the rain came down more and more heavily. Periodically the thunder cut across her utterances. She talked on, shouting against the noise.

"I have understood you so well and for so long."

A flash revealed her, aimed and intent, leaning towards him. Her eyes were two profound and menacing gun-barrels. The darkness re-engulfed her.

"You were a lonely soul seeking a companion soul. I could sympathise with you in your solitude. Your marriage . . ."

The thunder cut short the sentence. Miss Spence's voice became audible once more with the words:

". . . could offer no companionship to a man of your stamp. You needed a soul mate."

A soul mate—he! a soul mate. It was incredibly fantastic. "Georgette Leblanc, the ex-soul mate of Maurice Maeterlinck." He had seen that in the paper a few days ago. So it was thus that Janet Spence had painted him in her imagination—as a soul-mate. And for Doris he was a picture of goodness and the cleverest man in the world. And actually, really, he was what?—Who knows?

"My heart went out to you. I could understand; I was lonely, too." Miss Spence laid her hand on his knee. "You were so patient." Another flash. She was still aimed, dangerously. "You never complained. But I could guess—I could guess."

"How wonderful of you!" So he was an *âme incomprise*. "Only a woman's intuition . . ."

The thunder crashed and rumbled, died away, and only the sound of the rain was left. The thunder was his laughter, magnified, externalised. Flash and crash, there it was again, right on top of them.

"Don't you feel that you have within you something that is akin to this storm?" He could imagine her leaning forward as she uttered the words. "Passion makes one the equal of the elements."

What was his gambit now? Why, obviously, he should have said, "Yes," and ventured on some unequivocal gesture. But Mr. Hutton suddenly took fright. The ginger beer in him had gone flat. The woman was serious—terribly serious. He was appalled.

Passion? "No," he desperately answered. "I am without passion."

But his remark was either unheard or unheeded, for Miss Spence went on with a growing exaltation, speaking so rapidly, however, and in such a burningly intimate whisper that Mr. Hutton found it very difficult to distinguish what she was saying. She was telling him, as far as he could make out, the story of her life. The lightning was less frequent now, and there were long intervals of darkness. But at each flash he saw her still aiming towards him, still yearning forward with a terrifying intensity. Darkness, the rain, and then flash! her face was there, close at hand. A pale mask, greenish white; the large eyes, the narrow barrel of the mouth, the heavy eyebrows. Agrippina, or wasn't it rather—yes, wasn't it rather George Robey?

He began devising absurd plans for escaping. He might suddenly jump up, pretending he had seen a burglar—Stop thief! stop thief!—and dash off into the night in pursuit. Or should he say that he felt faint, a heart attack? or that he had seen a ghost—Emily's ghost—in the garden? Absorbed in his childish plotting, he had ceased to pay any attention to Miss

Spence's words. The spasmodic clutching of her hand recalled his thoughts.

"I honoured you for that, Henry," she was saying.

Honoured him for what?

"Marriage is a sacred tie, and your respect for it, even when the marriage was, as it was in your case, an unhappy one, made me respect you and admire you, and—shall I dare say the word?—"

Oh, the burglar, the ghost in the garden! But it was too late.

". . . yes, love you, Henry, all the more. But we're free now, Henry."

Free? There was a movement in the dark, and she was kneeling on the floor by his chair.

"Oh, Henry, Henry, I have been unhappy too."

Her arms embraced him, and by the shaking of her body he could feel that she was sobbing. She might have been a suppliant crying for mercy.

"You mustn't, Janet," he protested. Those tears were terrible, terrible. "Not now, not now! You must be calm; you must go to bed." He patted her shoulder, then got up, disengaging himself from her embrace. He left her still crouching on the floor beside the chair on which he had been sitting.

Groping his way into the hall, and without waiting to look for his hat, he went out of the house, taking infinite pains to close the front door noiselessly behind him. The clouds had blown over, and the moon was shining from a clear sky. There were puddles all along the road, and a noise of running water rose from the gutters and ditches. Mr. Hutton splashed along, not caring if he got wet.

How heartrendingly she had sobbed! With the emotions of pity and remorse that the recollection evoked in him there was a certain resentment: why couldn't she have played the game that he was playing—the heartless, amusing game? Yes, but he had known all the time that she wouldn't, she

couldn't, play that game; he had known and persisted.

What had she said about passion and the elements? Something absurdly stale, but true, true. There she was, a cloud black-bosomed and charged with thunder, and he, like some absurd little Benjamin Franklin, had sent up a kite into the heart of the menace. Now he was complaining that his toy had drawn the lightning.

She was probably still kneeling by that chair in the loggia, crying.

But why hadn't he been able to keep up the game? Why had his irresponsibility deserted him, leaving him suddenly sober in a cold world? There were no answers to any of his questions. One idea burned steady and luminous in his mind—the idea of flight. He must get away at once.

#### IV

"What are you thinking about, Teddy Bear?"

"Nothing."

There was a silence. Mr. Hutton remained motionless, his elbows on the parapet of the terrace, his chin in his hands, looking down over Florence. He had taken a villa on one of the hilltops to the south of the city. From a little raised terrace at the end of the garden one looked down a long fertile valley on to the town and beyond it to the bleak mass of Monte Morello and, eastward of it, to the peopled hill of Fiesole, dotted with white houses. Everything was clear and luminous in the September sunshine.

"Are you worried about anything?"

"No, thank you."

"Tell me, Teddy Bear."

"But, my dear, there's nothing to tell." Mr. Hutton turned round, smiled, and patted the girl's hand. "I think you'd better go in and have your siesta. It's too hot for you here."

"Very well, Teddy Bear. Are you coming too?"

"When I've finished my cigar."

"All right. But do hurry up and finish it, Teddy Bear." Slowly, reluctantly, she descended the steps of the terrace and walked toward the house.

Mr. Hutton continued his contemplation of Florence. He had need to be alone. It was good sometimes to escape from Doris and the restless solicitude of her passion. He had never known the pains of loving hopelessly, but he was experiencing now the pains of being loved. These last weeks had been a period of growing discomfort. Doris was always with him, like an obsession, like a guilty conscience. Yes, it was good to be alone.

He pulled an envelope out of his pocket and opened it, not without reluctance. He hated letters; they always contained something unpleasant—nowadays, since his second marriage. This was from his sister. He began skimming through the insulting home-truths of which it was composed. The words "indecent haste," "social suicide," "scarcely cold in her grave," "person of the lower classes," all occurred. They were inevitable now in any communication from a well-meaning and right-thinking relative. Impatient, he was about to tear the stupid letter to pieces when his eye fell on a sentence at the bottom of the third page. His heart beat with uncomfortable violence as he read it. It was too monstrous! Janet Spence was going about telling everyone that he had poisoned his wife in order to marry Doris. What damnable malice! Ordinarily a man of the suavest temper, Mr. Hutton found himself trembling with rage. He took the childish satisfaction of calling names—he cursed the woman.

Then suddenly he saw the ridiculous side of the situation. The notion that he should have murdered anyone in order to marry Doris! If they only knew how miserably bored he was. Poor, dear Janet! She had tried to be malicious; she had only succeeded in being stupid.

A sound of footsteps aroused him; he looked round. In the garden below the little terrace the servant girl of the house was picking fruit. A Neapolitan, strayed somehow as far

north as Florence, she was a specimen of the classical type—a little debased. Her profile might have been taken from a Sicilian coin of a bad period. Her features, carved floridly in the grand tradition, expressed an almost perfect stupidity. Her mouth was the most beautiful thing about her; the calligraphic hand of nature had richly curved it into an expression of mulish bad temper. . . . Under her hideous black clothes, Mr. Hutton divined a powerful body, firm and massive. He had looked at her before with a vague interest and curiosity. To-day the curiosity defined and focused itself into a desire. An idyll of Theocritus. Here was the woman; he, alas, was not precisely like a goatherd on the volcanic hills. He called to her.

“Armida!”

The smile with which she answered him was so provocative, attested so easy a virtue, that Mr. Hutton took fright. He was on the brink once more—on the brink. He must draw back, oh! quickly, quickly, before it was too late. The girl continued to look up at him.

“*Ha chiamato?*” she asked at last.

Stupidity or reason? Oh, there was no choice now. It was imbecility every time.

“*Scendo,*” he called back to her. Twelve steps led from the garden to the terrace. Mr. Hutton counted them. Down, down, down, down. . . . He saw a vision of himself descending from one circle of the inferno to the next—from a darkness full of wind and hail to an abyss of stinking mud.

## V

For a good many days the Hutton case had a place on the front page of every newspaper. There had been no more popular murder trial since George Smith had temporarily eclipsed the European War by drowning in a warm bath his seventh bride. The public imagination was stirred by this tale of a murder brought to light months after the date of the



crime. Here, it was felt, was one of those incidents in human life, so notable because they are so rare, which do definitely justify the ways of God to man. A wicked man had been moved by an illicit passion to kill his wife. For months he had lived in sin and fancied security—only to be dashed at last more horribly into the pit he had prepared for himself. "Murder will out," and here was a case of it. The readers of the newspapers were in a position to follow every movement of the hand of God. There had been vague, but persistent rumours in the neighbourhood; the police had taken action at last. Then came the exhumation order, the post-mortem examination, the inquest, the evidence of the experts, the verdict of the coroner's jury, the trial, the condemnation. For once Providence had done its duty, obviously, grossly, didactically, as in a melodrama. The newspapers were right in making of the case the staple intellectual food of a whole season.

Mr. Hutton's first emotion when he was summoned from Italy to give evidence at the inquest was one of indignation. It was a monstrous, a scandalous thing that the police should take such idle, malicious gossip seriously. When the inquest was over he would bring an action for malicious prosecution against the Chief Constable; he would sue the Spence woman for slander.

The inquest was opened; the astonishing evidence unrolled itself. The experts had examined the body, and had found traces of arsenic; they were of opinion that the late Mrs. Hutton had died of arsenic poisoning.

Arsenic poisoning. . . . Emily had died of arsenic poisoning? After that, Mr. Hutton learned with surprise that there was enough arsenicated insecticide in his greenhouses to poison an army.

It was now, quite suddenly, that he saw it: there was a case against him. Fascinated, he watched it growing, growing, like some monstrous tropical plant. It was enveloping him, surrounding him; he was lost in a tangled forest.

When was the poison administered? The experts agreed that it must have been swallowed eight or nine hours before death. About lunch-time? Yes, about lunch-time. Clara, the parlour-maid, was called. Mrs. Hutton, she remembered, had asked her to go and fetch her medicine. Mr. Hutton had volunteered to go instead; he had gone alone. Miss Spence—ah, the memory of the storm, the white aimed face! the horror of it all!—Miss Spence confirmed Clara's statement, and added that Mr. Hutton had come back with the medicine already poured out in a wineglass, not in the bottle.

Mr. Hutton's indignation evaporated. He was dismayed, frightened. It was all too fantastic to be taken seriously, and yet this nightmare was a fact—it was actually happening.

M'Nab had seen them kissing, often. He had taken them for a drive on the day of Mrs. Hutton's death. He could see them reflected in the wind-screen, sometimes out of the tail of his eye.

The inquest was adjourned. That evening Doris went to bed with a headache. When he went to her room after dinner, Mr. Hutton found her crying.

"What's the matter?" He sat down on the edge of her bed and began to stroke her hair. For a long time she did not answer, and he went on stroking her hair mechanically, almost unconsciously; sometimes, even, he bent down and kissed her bare shoulder. He had his own affairs, however, to think about. What had happened? How was it that the stupid gossip had actually come true? Emily had died of arsenic poisoning. It was absurd, impossible. The order of things had been broken, and he was at the mercy of an irresponsibility. What had happened, what was going to happen? He was interrupted in the midst of his thoughts.

"It's my fault—it's my fault!" Doris suddenly sobbed out. "I shouldn't have loved you; I oughtn't to have let you love me. Why was I ever born?"

Mr. Hutton didn't say anything, but looked down in silence at the abject figure of misery lying on the bed.

"If they do anything to you I shall kill myself."

She sat up, held him for a moment at arm's length, and looked at him with a kind of violence, as though she were never to see him again.

"I love you, I love you, I love you." She drew him, inert and passive, towards her, clasped him, pressed herself against him. "I didn't know you loved me as much as that, Teddy Bear. But why did you do it—why did you do it?"

Mr. Hutton undid her clasping arms and got up. His face became very red. "You seem to take it for granted that I murdered my wife," he said. "It's really too grotesque. What do you all take me for? A cinema hero?" He had begun to lose his temper. All the exasperation, all the fear and bewilderment of the day, was transformed into a violent anger against her. "It's all such damned stupidity. Haven't you any conception of a civilised man's mentality? Do I look the sort of man who'd go about slaughtering people? I suppose you imagined I was so insanely in love with you that I could commit any folly. When will you women understand that one isn't insanely in love? All one asks for is a quiet life, which you won't allow one to have. I don't know what the devil ever induced me to marry you. It was all a damned stupid, practical joke. And now you go about saying I'm a murderer. I won't stand it."

Mr. Hutton stamped towards the door. He had said horrible things, he knew—odious things that he ought speedily to unsay. But he wouldn't. He closed the door behind him.

"Teddy Bear!" He turned the handle; the latch clicked into place. "Teddy Bear!" The voice that came to him through the closed door was agonised. Should he go back? He ought to go back. He touched the handle, then withdrew his fingers and quickly walked away. When he was half-way down the stairs he halted. She might try to do something silly—throw herself out of the window or God knows what! He listened attentively; there was no sound. But he pictured her very clearly, tiptoeing across the room, lifting the sash

as high as it would go, leaning out into the cold night air. It was raining a little. Under the window lay the paved terrace. How far below? Twenty-five or thirty feet? Once, when he was walking along Piccadilly, a dog had jumped out of a third-storey window of the Ritz. He had seen it fall; he had heard it strike the pavement. Should he go back? He was damned if he would; he hated her.

He sat for a long time in the library. What had happened? What was happening? He turned the question over and over in his mind and could find no answer. Suppose the nightmare dreamed itself out to its horrible conclusion. Death was waiting for him. His eyes filled with tears; he wanted so passionately to live. "Just to be alive." Poor Emily had wished it too, he remembered: "Just to be alive." There were still so many places in this astonishing world unvisited, so many queer delightful people still unknown, so many lovely women never so much as seen. The huge white oxen would still be dragging their wains along the Tuscan roads, the cypresses would still go up, straight as pillars, to the blue heaven; but he would not be there to see them. And the sweet southern wines—Tears of Christ and Blood of Judas—others would drink them, not he. Others would walk down the obscure and narrow lanes between the bookshelves in the London Library, sniffing the dusty perfume of good literature, peering at strange titles, discovering unknown names, exploring the fringes of vast domains of knowledge. He would be lying in a hole in the ground. And why, why? Confusedly he felt that some extraordinary kind of justice was being done. In the past he had been wanton and imbecile and irresponsible. Now Fate was playing as wantonly, as irresponsibly, with him. It was tit for tat, and God existed after all.

He felt that he would like to pray. Forty years ago he used to kneel by his bed every evening. The nightly formula of his childhood came to him almost unsought from some long unopened chamber of the memory. "God bless Father and Mother, Tom and Cissie and the Baby, Mademoiselle and

Nurse, and everyone that I love, and make me a good boy. Amen." They were all dead now—all except Cissie.

His mind seemed to soften and dissolve; a great calm descended upon his spirit. He went upstairs to ask Doris's forgiveness. He found her lying on the couch at the foot of the bed. On the floor beside her stood a blue bottle of liniment, marked "Not to be taken"; she seemed to have drunk about half of it.

"You didn't love me," was all she said when she opened her eyes to find him bending over her.

Dr. Libbard arrived in time to prevent any very serious consequences. "You mustn't do this again," he said while Mr. Hutton was out of the room.

"What's to prevent me?" she asked defiantly.

Dr. Libbard looked at her with his large, sad eyes. "There's nothing to prevent you," he said. "Only yourself and your baby. Isn't it rather bad luck on your baby, not allowing it to come into the world because you want to go out of it?"

Doris was silent for a time. "All right," she whispered. "I won't."

Mr. Hutton sat by her bedside for the rest of the night. He felt himself now to be indeed a murderer. For a time he persuaded himself that he loved this pitiable child. Dozing in his chair, he woke up, stiff and cold, to find himself drained dry, as it were, of every emotion. He had become nothing but a tired and suffering carcase. At six o'clock he undressed and went to bed for a couple of hours' sleep. In the course of the same afternoon the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of "Wilful Murder," and Mr. Hutton was committed for trial.

## VI

Miss Spence was not at all well. She had found her public appearances in the witness-box very trying, and when it was all over she had something that was very nearly a break-

down. She slept badly, and suffered from nervous indigestion. Dr. Libbard used to call every other day. She talked to him a great deal—mostly about the Hutton case. . . . Her moral indignation was always on the boil. Wasn't it appalling to think that one had had a murderer in one's house? Wasn't it extraordinary that one could have been for so long mistaken about the man's character? (But she had had an inkling from the first.) And then the girl he had gone off with—so low class, so little better than a prostitute. The news that the second Mrs. Hutton was expecting a baby—the posthumous child of a condemned and executed criminal—revolted her; the thing was shocking—an obscenity. Dr. Libbard answered her gently and vaguely, and prescribed bromide.

One morning he interrupted her in the midst of her customary tirade. "By the way," he said in his soft, melancholy voice, "I suppose it was really you who poisoned Mrs. Hutton."

Miss Spence stared at him for two or three seconds with enormous eyes, and then quietly said, "Yes." After that she started to cry.

"In the coffee, I suppose."

She seemed to nod assent. Dr. Libbard took out his fountain-pen, and in his neat, meticulous calligraphy wrote out a prescription for a sleeping-draught.

# *A Jury of Her Peers*

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S U S A N   G L A S P E L L

WHEN Martha Hale opened the storm-door and got a cut of the north wind, she ran back for her big woolen scarf. As she hurriedly wound that round her head her eye made a scandalized sweep of her kitchen. It was no ordinary thing that called her away—it was probably farther from ordinary than anything that had ever happened in Dickson County. But what her eye took in was that her kitchen was in no shape for leaving: her bread all ready for mixing, half the flour sifted and half unsifted.

She hated to see things half done; but she had been at that when the team from town stopped to get Mr. Hale, and then the sheriff came running in to say his wife wished Mrs. Hale would come too—adding, with a grin, that he guessed she was getting scarey and wanted another woman along. So she had dropped everything right where it was.

“Martha!” now came her husband’s impatient voice. “Don’t keep folks waiting out here in the cold.”

She again opened the storm-door, and this time joined the three men and the one woman waiting for her in the big two-seated buggy.

After she had the robes tucked around her she took another look at the woman who sat beside her on the back seat. She had met Mrs. Peters the year before at the county fair, and the thing she remembered about her was that she didn’t seem like a sheriff’s wife. She was small and thin and

didn't have a strong voice. Mrs. Gorman, the sheriff's wife before Gorman went out and Peters came in, had a voice that somehow seemed to be backing up the law with every word. But if Mrs. Peters didn't look like a sheriff's wife, Peters made it up in looking like a sheriff. He was to a dot the kind of man who could get himself elected sheriff—a heavy man with a big voice, who was particularly genial with the law-abiding, as if to make it plain that he knew the difference between criminals and non-criminals. And right there it came into Mrs. Hale's mind, with a stab, that this man who was so pleasant and lively with all of them was going to the Wrights' now as a sheriff.

"The country's not very pleasant this time of year," Mrs. Peters at last ventured, as if she felt they ought to be talking as well as the men.

Mrs. Hale scarcely finished her reply, for they had gone up a little hill and could see the Wright place now, and seeing it did not make her feel like talking. It looked very lonesome this cold March morning. It had always been a lonesome-looking place. It was down in a hollow, and the poplar trees around it were lonesome-looking trees. The men were looking at it and talking about what had happened. The county attorney was bending to one side of the buggy, and kept looking steadily at the place as they drew up to it.

"I'm glad you came with me," Mrs. Peters said nervously, as the two women were about to follow the men in through the kitchen door.

Even after she had her foot on the door-step, her hand on the knob, Martha Hale had a moment of feeling she could not cross that threshold. And the reason it seemed she couldn't cross it now was simply because she hadn't crossed it before. Time and time again it had been in her mind, "I ought to go over and see Minnie Foster"—she still thought of her as Minnie Foster, though for twenty years she had been Mrs. Wright. And then there was always something to do and Minnie Foster would go from her mind. But *now* she could come.



The men went over to the stove. The women stood close together by the door. Young Henderson, the county attorney, turned around and said:

"Come up to the fire, ladies."

Mrs. Peters took a step forward, then stopped. "I'm not—cold," she said.

The men talked for a minute about what a good thing it was the sheriff had sent his deputy out that morning to make a fire for them, and then Sheriff Peters stepped back from the stove, unbuttoned his outer coat, and leaned his hands on the kitchen table in a way that seemed to mark the beginning of official business. "Now, Mr. Hale," he said in a sort of semi-official voice, "before we move things about, you tell Mr. Henderson just what it was you saw when you came here yesterday morning."

The county attorney was looking around the kitchen.

"By the way," he said, "has anything been moved?" He turned to the sheriff. "Are things just as you left them yesterday?"

Peters looked from cupboard to sink; from that to a small worn rocker a little to one side of the kitchen table.

"It's just the same."

"Somebody should have been left here yesterday," said the county attorney.

"Oh—yesterday," returned the sheriff, with a little gesture as of yesterday having been more than he could bear to think of. "When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—let me tell you, I had my hands full *yesterday*. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today, George, and as long as I went over everything here myself—"

"Well, Mr. Hale," said the county attorney, in a way of letting what was past and gone go, "tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning."

Mrs. Hale, still leaning against the door, had that sinking feeling of the mother whose child is about to speak a piece. Lewis often wandered along and got things mixed up in a

story. She hoped he would tell this straight and plain, and not say unnecessary things that would just make things harder for Minnie Foster. He didn't begin at once, and she noticed that he looked queer—as if standing in that kitchen and having to tell what he had seen there yesterday morning made him almost sick.

"Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes," Mrs. Hale's husband began.

Harry was Mrs. Hale's oldest boy. He wasn't with them now, for the very good reason that those potatoes never got to town yesterday and he was taking them this morning, so he hadn't been home when the sheriff stopped to say he wanted Mr. Hale to come over to the Wright place and tell the county attorney his story there, where he could point it all out.

"We came along this road," Hale was going on, with a motion of his hand to the road over which they had just come, "and as we got in sight of the house I says to Harry, 'I'm goin' to see if I can't get John Wright to take a telephone.' You see," he explained to Henderson, "unless I can get somebody to go in with me they won't come out this branch road except for a price I can't pay. I'd spoke to Wright about it once before; but he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—guess you know about how much he talked himself. But I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, and said all the women-folks liked the telephones, and that in this lonesome stretch of road it would be a good thing—well, I said to Harry that that was what I was going to say—though I said at the same time that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—"

Now, there he was!—saying things he didn't need to say. Mrs. Hale tried to catch her husband's eye, but fortunately the county attorney interrupted with:

"Let's talk about that a little later, Mr. Hale. I do want

to talk about that, but I'm anxious now to get along to just exactly what happened when you got here."

When he began this time, it was very deliberately and carefully:

"I didn't see or hear anything. I knocked at the door. And still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up—it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, louder, and I thought I heard somebody say, 'Come in.' I wasn't sure—I'm not sure yet. But I opened the door—this door," jerking a hand toward the door by which the two women stood, "and there, in that rocker"—pointing to it—"sat Mrs. Wright."

Everyone in the kitchen looked at the rocker. It came into Mrs. Hale's mind that that rocker didn't look in the least like Minnie Foster—the Minnie Foster of twenty years before. It was a dingy red, with wooden rungs up the back, and the middle rung was gone, and the chair sagged to one side.

"How did she—look?" the county attorney was inquiring.

"Well," said Hale, "she looked—queer."

"How do you mean—queer?"

As he asked it he took out a notebook and pencil. Mrs. Hale did not like the sight of that pencil. She kept her eye fixed on her husband, as if to keep him from saying unnecessary things that would go into that notebook and make trouble.

Hale did speak guardedly, as if the pencil had affected him too.

"Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of—done up."

"How did she seem to feel about your coming?"

"Why, I don't think she minded—one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, 'Ho' do, Mrs. Wright? It's cold, ain't it?' And she said, 'Is it?'—and went on pleatin' at her apron.

"Well, I was surprised. She didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to sit down, but just set there, not even lookin' at

me. And so I said: 'I want to see John.' And then she laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh.

"I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said, a little sharp, 'Can I see John?' 'No,' says she—kind of dull like. 'Ain't he home?' says I. Then she looked at me. 'Yes,' says she, 'he's home.' 'Then why can't I see him?' I asked her, out of patience with her now. "'Cause he's dead,' says she, just as quiet and dull—and fell to pleatin' her apron. 'Dead?' says I, like you do when you can't take in what you've heard.

"She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth.

"'Why—where is he?' says I, not knowing *what* to say.

"She just pointed upstairs—like this"—pointing to the room above.

"I got up, with the idea of going up there myself. By this time I—didn't know what to do. I walked from there to here; then I says: 'Why, what did he die of?'

"'He died of a rope round his neck,' says she; and just went on pleatin' at her apron."

Hale stopped speaking, and stood staring at the rocker, as if he were still seeing the woman who had sat there the morning before. Nobody spoke; it was as if everyone were seeing the woman who had sat there the morning before.

"And what did you do then?" the county attorney at last broke the silence.

"I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. I got Harry in, and we went upstairs." His voice fell almost to a whisper. "There he was—lying over the—"

"I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs," the attorney interrupted, "where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story."

"Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked—"

He stopped, his face twitching.

"But Harry, he went up to him, and he said, 'No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything.' So we went downstairs. She was still sitting that same way. 'Has any-

body been notified?" I asked. "No," said she, unconcerned.

"Who did this, Mrs. Wright?" said Harry. He said it business-like, and she stopped pleatin' at her apron. "I don't know," she says. "You don't *know*?" says Harry. "Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?" "Yes," says she, "but I was on the inside." "Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him, and you didn't wake up?" says Harry. "I didn't wake up," she said after him.

"We may have looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, 'I sleep sound.'"

"Harry was going to ask her more questions, but I said maybe that weren't our business; maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner or the sheriff. So Harry went fast as he could over to High Road—the Rivers' place, where there's a telephone."

"And what did she do when she knew you had gone for the coroner?" The attorney got his pencil in his hand all ready for writing.

"She moved from that chair to this one over here"—Hale pointed to a small chair in the corner—"and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone; and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared."

At sound of a moving pencil the man who was telling the story looked up.

"I dunno—maybe it wasn't scared," he hastened; "I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't."

He said that last with relief, and moved a little, as if relaxing. Everyone moved a little. The county attorney walked toward the stair door.

"I guess we'll go upstairs first—then out to the barn and around."

He paused and looked around the kitchen.

"You're convinced there was nothing important here?" he asked the sheriff. "Nothing that would—point to any motive?"

The sheriff too looked all around, as if to re-convince himself.

"Nothing here but kitchen things," he said, with a little laugh for the insignificance of kitchen things.

The county attorney was looking at the cupboard—a peculiar, ungainly structure, half closet and half cupboard, the upper part of it being built in the wall, and the lower part just the old-fashioned kitchen cupboard. As if its queer-ness attracted him, he got a chair and opened the upper part and looked in. After a moment he drew his hand away sticky.

"Here's a nice mess," he said resentfully.

The two women had drawn nearer, and now the sheriff's wife spoke.

"Oh—her fruit," she said, looking to Mrs. Hale for sympathetic understanding. She turned back to the county attorney and explained: "She worried about that when it turned so cold last night. She said the fire would go out and her jars burst."

Mrs. Peters' husband broke into a laugh.

"Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder, and worrying about her preserves!"

The young attorney set his lips.

"I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about."

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Hale's husband, with good-natured superiority, "women are used to worrying over trifles."

The two women moved a little closer together. Neither of them spoke. The county attorney seemed suddenly to remember his manners—and think of his future.

"And yet," said he, with the gallantry of a young politician, "for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies?"

The women did not speak, did not unbend. He went to the sink and began washing his hands. He turned to wipe them on the roller towel—whirled it for a cleaner place.

"Dirty towels! Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?"

He kicked his foot against some dirty pans under the sink.

"There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm," said Mrs. Hale stiffly.

"To be sure. And yet"—with a little bow to her—"I know there are some Dickson County farm-houses that do not have such roller towels."

"Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be."

"Ah, loyal to your sex, I see," he laughed. He stopped and gave her a keen look. "But you and Mrs. Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too."

Martha Hale shook her head.

"I've seen little enough of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year."

"And why was that? You didn't like her?"

"I liked her well enough," she replied with spirit. "Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then—" She looked around the kitchen.

"Yes?" he encouraged.

"It never seemed a very cheerful place," said she, more to herself than to him.

"No," he agreed; "I don't think anyone would call it cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the home-making instinct."

"Well, I don't know as Wright had, either," she muttered.

"You mean they didn't get on very well?" he was quick to ask.

"No; I don't mean anything," she answered, with decision. As she turned a little away from him, she added: "But I don't think a place would be any the cheerfuller for John Wright's bein' in it."

"I'd like to talk to you about that a little later, Mrs. Hale,"

he said. "I'm anxious to get the lay of things upstairs now."

He moved toward the stair door, followed by the two men.

"I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does'll be all right?" the sheriff inquired. "She was to take in some clothes for her, you know—and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday."

The county attorney looked at the two women whom they were leaving alone there among the kitchen things.

"Yes—Mrs. Peters," he said, his glance resting on the woman who was not Mrs. Peters, the big farmer woman who stood behind the sheriff's wife. "Of course Mrs. Peters is one of us," he said, in a manner of entrusting responsibility. "And keep your eye out, Mrs. Peters, for anything that might be of use. No telling; you women might come upon a clue to the motive—and that's the thing we need."

Mr. Hale rubbed his face after the fashion of a showman getting ready for a pleasantry.

"But would the women know a clue if they did come upon it?" he said; and, having delivered himself of this, he followed the others through the stair door.

The women stood motionless and silent, listening to the footsteps, first upon the stairs, then in the room above.

Then, as if releasing herself from something strange, Mrs. Hale began to arrange the dirty pans under the sink, which the county attorney's disdainful push of the foot had deranged.

"I'd hate to have men comin' into my kitchen," she said testily—"snoopin' round and criticizin'."

"Of course it's no more than their duty," said the sheriff's wife, in her manner of timid acquiescence.

"Duty's all right," replied Mrs. Hale bluffly; "but I guess that deputy sheriff that come out to make the fire might have got a little of this on." She gave the roller towel a pull. "Wish I'd thought of that sooner! Seems mean to talk about



her for not having things slicked up, when she had to come away in such a hurry."

She looked around the kitchen. Certainly it was not "slicked up." Her eye was held by a bucket of sugar on a low shelf. The cover was off the wooden bucket, and beside it was a paper bag—half full.

Mrs. Hale moved toward it.

"She was putting this in there," she said to herself—slowly.

She thought of the flour in her kitchen at home—half sifted. She had been interrupted, and had left things half done. What had interrupted Minnie Foster? Why had that work been left half done? She made a move as if to finish it—unfinished things always bothered her—and then she glanced around and saw that Mrs. Peters was watching her—and she didn't want Mrs. Peters to get that feeling she had got of work begun and then—for some reason—not finished.

"It's a shame about her fruit," she said, and walked toward the cupboard that the county attorney had opened, and got on the chair, murmuring: "I wonder if it's all gone."

It was a sorry enough looking sight, but "Here's one that's all right," she said at last. She held it toward the light. "This is cherries, too." She looked again. "I declare I believe that's the only one."

With a sigh, she got down from the chair, went to the sink, and wiped off the bottle.

"She'll feel awful bad, after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer."

She set the bottle on the table, and, with another sigh, started to sit down in the rocker. But she did not sit down. Something kept her from sitting down in that chair. She straightened—stepped back, and, half turned away, stood looking at it, seeing the woman who had sat there "pleatin' at her apron."

The thin voice of the sheriff's wife broke in upon her: "I must be getting those things from the front room closet." She opened the door into the other room, started in, stepped back. "You coming with me, Mrs. Hale?" she asked nervously. "You—you could help me get them."

They were soon back—the stark coldness of that shut-up room was not a thing to linger in.

"My!" said Mrs. Peters, dropping the things on the table and hurrying to the stove.

Mrs. Hale stood examining the clothes the woman who was being detained in town had said she wanted.

"Wright was closet" she exclaimed, holding up a shabby black skirt that bore the marks of much making over. "I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. I s'pose she felt she couldn't do her part; and then, you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively—when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls, singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was twenty years ago."

With a carefulness in which there was something tender, she folded the shabby clothes and piled them at one corner of the table. She looked up at Mrs. Peters, and there was something in the other woman's look that irritated her.

"She don't care," she said to herself. "Much difference it makes to her whether Minnie Foster had pretty clothes when she was a girl."

Then she looked again, and she wasn't so sure; in fact, she hadn't at any time been perfectly sure about Mrs. Peters. She had that shrinking manner, and yet her eyes looked as if they could see a long way into things.

"This all you was to take in?" asked Mrs. Hale.

"No," said the sheriff's wife; "she said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want," she ventured in her nervous little way, "for there's not much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. If you're used to wearing an apron—. She said they were in the bot-

tom drawer of this cupboard. Yes—here they are. And then her little shawl that always hung on the stair door.”

She took the small gray shawl from behind the door leading upstairs.

Suddenly Mrs. Hale took a quick step toward the other woman.

“Mrs. Peters!”

“Yes, Mrs. Hale?”

“Do you think she—did it?”

A frightened look blurred the other thing in Mrs. Peters’ eyes.

“Oh, I don’t know,” she said, in a voice that seemed to shrink away from the subject.

“Well, I don’t think she did,” affirmed Mrs. Hale stoutly. “Asking for an apron, and her little shawl. Worryin’ about her fruit.”

“Mr. Peters says—.” Footsteps were heard in the room above; she stopped, looked up, then went on in a lowered voice: “Mr. Peters says—it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech, and he’s going to make fun of her saying she didn’t—wake up.”

For a moment Mrs. Hale had no answer. Then, “Well, I guess John Wright didn’t wake up—when they was slippin’ that rope under his neck,” she muttered.

“No, it’s *strange*,” breathed Mrs. Peters. “They think it was such a—funny way to kill a man.”

“That’s just what Mr. Hale said,” said Mrs. Hale, in a resolutely natural voice. “There was a gun in the house. He says that’s what he can’t understand.”

“Mr. Henderson said, coming out, that what was needed for the case was a motive. Something to show anger—or sudden feeling.”

“Well, I don’t see any signs of anger around here,” said Mrs. Hale. “I don’t—”

She stopped. It was as if her mind tripped on something. Her eye was caught by a dish-towel in the middle of the

kitchen table. Slowly she moved toward the table. One half of it was wiped clean, the other half messy. Her eyes made a slow, almost unwilling turn to the bucket of sugar and the half empty bag beside it. Things begun—and not finished.

After a moment she stepped back, and said, in that manner of releasing herself: "Wonder how they're finding things upstairs? I hope she had it a little more red up there. You know"—she paused, and feeling gathered—"it seems kind of *sneaking*: locking her up in town and coming out here to get her own house to turn against her!"

"But, Mrs. Hale," said the sheriff's wife, "the law is the law."

"I s'pose 'tis," answered Mrs. Hale shortly.

She turned to the stove, worked with it a minute, and when she straightened up she said aggressively:

"The law is the law—and a bad stove is a bad stove. How'd you like to cook on this?"—pointing with the poker to the broken lining. She opened the oven door and started to express her opinion of the oven; but she was swept into her own thoughts, thinking of what it would mean, year after year, to have that stove to wrestle with. The thought of Minnie Foster trying to bake in that oven—and the thought of her never going over to see Minnie Foster—

She was startled by hearing Mrs. Peters say:

"A person gets discouraged—and loses heart."

The sheriff's wife had looked from the stove to the pail of water which had been carried in from outside. The two women stood there silent, above them the footsteps of the men who were looking for evidence against the woman who had worked in that kitchen. That look of seeing into things, of seeing through a thing to something else, was in the eyes of the sheriff's wife now. When Mrs. Hale next spoke to her, it was gently:

"Better loosen up your things, Mrs. Peters. We'll not feel them when we go out."

Mrs. Peters went to the back of the room to hang up the

fur tippet she was wearing. A moment later she exclaimed, "Why, she was piecing a quilt," and held up a large sewing basket piled high with quilt pieces.

Mrs. Hale spread some of the blocks out on the table.

"It's log-cabin pattern," she said, putting several of them together. "Pretty, isn't it?"

They were so engaged with the quilt that they did not hear the footsteps on the stairs. Just as the stair door opened Mrs. Hale was saying:

"Do you suppose she was going to quilt it or just knot it?"

The sheriff threw up his hands.

"They wonder whether she was going to quilt it or just knot it!" he cried.

There was a laugh for the ways of women, a warming of hands over the stove, and then the county attorney said briskly:

"Well, let's go right out to the barn and get that cleared up."

"I don't see as there's anything so strange," Mrs. Hale said resentfully, after the outside door had closed on the three men—"our taking up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. I don't see as it's anything to laugh about."

"Of course they've got awful important things on their minds," said the sheriff's wife apologetically.

They returned to an inspection of the block for the quilt. Mrs. Hale was looking at the fine, even sewing, and preoccupied with thoughts of the woman who had done that sewing, when she heard the sheriff's wife say, in a queer tone:

"Why, look at this one."

She turned to take the block held out to her.

"The sewing," said Mrs. Peters, in a troubled way. "All the rest of them have been so nice and even—but—this one. Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about!"

Their eyes met—something flashed to life, passed between them; then, as if with an effort, they seemed to pull away

from each other. A moment Mrs. Hale sat there, her hands folded over that sewing which was so unlike all the rest of the sewing. Then she had pulled a knot and drawn the threads.

"Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?" asked the sheriff's wife.

"Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good," said Mrs. Hale mildly.

"I don't think we ought to touch things," Mrs. Peters said, a little helplessly.

"I'll just finish up this end," answered Mrs. Hale, still in that mild, matter-of-fact fashion.

She threaded a needle and started to replace bad sewing with good. For a little while she sewed in silence. Then, in that thin, timid voice, she heard:

"Mrs. Hale!"

"Yes, Mrs. Peters?"

"What do you suppose she was so—nervous about?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. Hale, as if dismissing a thing not important enough to spend much time on. "I don't know as she was—nervous. I sew awful queer sometimes when I'm just tired."

She cut a thread, and out of the corner of her eye looked up at Mrs. Peters. The small, lean face of the sheriff's wife seemed to have tightened up. Her eyes had that look of peering into something. But next moment she moved, and said in her indecisive way:

"Well, I must get those clothes wrapped. They may be through sooner than we think. I wonder where I could find a piece of paper—and string."

"In that cupboard, maybe," suggested Mrs. Hale, after a glance around.

One piece of the crazy sewing remained unripped. Mrs. Peter's back turned, Martha Hale now scrutinized that piece, compared it with the dainty, accurate sewing of the other blocks. The difference was startling. Holding this block made

her feel queer, as if the distracted thoughts of the woman who had perhaps turned to it to try and quiet herself were communicating themselves to her.

Mrs. Peters' voice roused her.

"Here's a bird-cage," she said. "Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?"

"Why, I don't know whether she did or not." She turned to look at the cage Mrs. Peters was holding up. "I've not been here in so long." She sighed. "There was a man last year selling canaries cheap—but I don't know as she took one. Maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself."

"Seems kind of funny to think of a bird here." She half laughed—an attempt to put up a barrier. "But she must have had one—or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it."

"I suppose maybe the cat got it," suggested Mrs. Hale, resuming her sewing.

"No; she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. When they brought her to our house yesterday, my cat got in the room, and she was real upset and asked me to take it out."

"My sister Bessie was like that," laughed Mrs. Hale.

The sheriff's wife did not reply. The silence made Mrs. Hale turn around. Mrs. Peters was examining the bird-cage.

"Look at this door," she said slowly. "It's broke. One hinge has been pulled apart."

Mrs. Hale came nearer.

"Looks as if someone must have been—rough with it."

Again their eyes met—startled, questioning, apprehensive. For a moment neither spoke nor stirred. Then Mrs. Hale, turning away, said brusquely:

"If they're going to find any evidence, I wish they'd be about it. I don't like this place."

"But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale." Mrs. Peters put the bird-cage on the table and sat down. "It would be lonesome for me—sitting here alone."

"Yes, it would, wouldn't it?" agreed Mrs. Hale, a certain very determined naturalness in her voice. She had picked up the sewing, but now it dropped in her lap, and she murmured in a different voice: "But I tell you what I *do* wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I wish—I had."

"But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale. Your house—and your children."

"I could've come," retorted Mrs. Hale shortly. "I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I"—she looked around—"I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I don't know what it is, but it's a lonesome place, and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—" She did not put it into words.

"Well, you mustn't reproach yourself," counseled Mrs. Peters. "Somehow, we just don't see how it is with other folks till—something comes up."

"Not having children makes less work," mused Mrs. Hale, after a silence, "but it makes a quiet house—and Wright out to work all day—and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?"

"Not to know him. I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man."

"Yes—good," conceded John Wright's neighbor grimly. "He didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—" She stopped, shivered a little. "Like a raw wind that gets to the bone." Her eye fell upon the cage on the table before her, and she added, almost bitterly: "I should think she would've wanted a bird!"

Suddenly she leaned forward, looking intently at the cage. "But what do you s'pose went wrong with it?"

"I don't know," returned Mrs. Peters; "unless it got sick and died."



But after she said it she reached over and swung the broken door. Both women watched it as if somehow held by it.

"You didn't know—her?" Mrs. Hale asked, a gentler note in her voice.

"Not till they brought her yesterday," said the sheriff's wife.

"She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself. Real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change."

That held her for a long time. Finally, as if struck with a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things, she exclaimed:

"Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind."

"Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale," agreed the sheriff's wife, as if she too were glad to come into the atmosphere of a simple kindness. "There couldn't possibly be any objection to that, could there? Now, just what will I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and her things."

They turned to the sewing basket.

"Here's some red," said Mrs. Hale, bringing out a roll of cloth. Underneath that was a box. "Here, maybe her scissors are in here—and her things." She held it up. "What a pretty box! I'll warrant that was something she had a long time ago—when she was a girl."

She held it in her hand a moment; then, with a little sigh, opened it.

Instantly her hand went to her nose.

"Why—!"

Mrs. Peters drew nearer—then turned away.

"There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk," faltered Mrs. Hale.

Her hand not steady, Mrs. Hale raised the piece of silk. "Oh, Mrs. Peters!" she cried, "it's—"

Mrs. Peters bent closer.

"It's the bird," she whispered.

"But, Mrs. Peters!" cried Mrs. Hale. "*Look* at it! Its *neck*—look at its neck! It's all—other side *to*."

The sheriff's wife again bent closer.

"Somebody wrung its neck," said she, in a voice that was slow and deep.

And then again the eyes of the two women met—this time clung together in a look of dawning comprehension, of growing horror. Mrs. Peters looked from the dead bird to the broken door of the cage. Again their eyes met. And just then there was a sound at the outside door.

Mrs. Hale slipped the box under the quilt pieces in the basket, and sank into the chair before it. Mrs. Peters stood holding to the table. The county attorney and the sheriff came in.

"Well, ladies," said the county attorney, as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries, "have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?"

"We think," began the sheriff's wife in a flurried voice, "that she was going to—knot it."

He was too preoccupied to notice the change that came in her voice on that last.

"Well, that's very interesting, I'm sure," he said tolerantly. He caught sight of the cage. "Has the bird flown?"

"We think the cat got it," said Mrs. Hale in a voice curiously even.

He was walking up and down, as if thinking something out.

"Is there a cat?" he asked absently.

Mrs. Hale shot a look up at the sheriff's wife.

"Well, not *now*," said Mrs. Peters. "They're superstitious, you know; they leave."

The county attorney did not heed her. "No sign at all of anyone having come in from the outside," he said to Peters,

in the manner of continuing an interrupted conversation. "Their own rope. Now let's go upstairs again and go over it, piece by piece. It would have to have been someone who knew just the—"

The stair door closed behind them and their voices were lost.

The two women sat motionless, not looking at each other, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they spoke now it was as if they were afraid of what they were saying, but as if they could not help saying it.

"She liked the bird," said Martha Hale, low and slowly. "She was going to bury it in that pretty box."

"When I was a girl," said Mrs. Peters, under her breath, "my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—before I could get there—" She covered her face an instant. "If they hadn't held me back I would have"—she caught herself, looked upstairs where footsteps were heard, and finished weakly—"hurt him."

Then they sat without speaking or moving.

"I wonder how it would seem," Mrs. Hale at last began, as if feeling her way over strange ground—"never to have had any children around." Her eyes made a slow sweep of the kitchen, as if seeing what that kitchen had meant through all the years. "No, Wright wouldn't like the bird," she said after that—"a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that too." Her voice tightened.

Mrs. Peters moved easily.

"Of course we don't know who killed the bird."

"I knew John Wright," was Mrs. Hale's answer.

"It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale," said the sheriff's wife. "Killing a man while he slept—slipping a thing round his neck that choked the life out of him."

Mrs. Hale's hand went out to the bird-cage.

"His neck. Choked the life out of him."

"We don't *know* who killed him," whispered Mrs. Peters wildly. "We don't *know*."

Mrs. Hale had not moved. "If there had been years and years of—nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still—after the bird was still."

It was as if something within her not herself had spoken, and it found in Mrs. Peters something she did not know as herself.

"I know what stillness is," she said, in a queer, monotonous voice. "When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old—and me with no other then—"

Mrs. Hale stirred.

"How soon do you suppose they'll be through looking for the evidence?"

"I know what stillness is," repeated Mrs. Peters, in just that same way. Then she too pulled back. "The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale," she said in her tight little way.

"I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster," was the answer, "when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons, and stood up there in the choir and sang."

The picture of that girl, the fact that she had lived neighbor to that girl for twenty years, and had let her die for lack of life, was suddenly more than she could bear.

"Oh, I *wish* I'd come over here once in a while!" she cried. "That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?"

"We mustn't take on," said Mrs. Peters, with a frightened look toward the stairs.

"I might 'a' *known* she needed help! I tell you, it's *queer*, Mrs. Peters. We live close together, and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing! If it weren't—why do you and I *understand*? Why do we *know*—what we know this minute?"

She dashed her hand across her eyes. Then, seeing the jar

of fruit on the table, she reached for it and choked out:

"If I was you I wouldn't *tell* her her fruit was gone! Tell her it *ain't*. Tell her it's all right—all of it. Here—take this in to prove it to her! She—she may never know whether it was broke or not."

Mrs. Peters reached out for the bottle of fruit as if she were glad to take it—as if touching a familiar thing, having something to do, could keep her from something else. She got up, looked about for something to wrap the fruit in, took a petticoat from the pile of clothes she had brought from the front room, and nervously started winding that round the bottle.

"Myl!" she began, in a high, false voice, "it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary." She hurried over that. "As if that could have anything to do with—with— My, wouldn't they *laugh?*"

Footsteps were heard on the stairs.

"Maybe they would," muttered Mrs. Hale—"maybe they wouldn't."

"No, Peters," said the county attorney incisively; "it's all perfectly clear, except the reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing—something to show. Something to make a story about. A thing that would connect up with this clumsy way of doing it."

In a covert way Mrs. Hale looked at Mrs. Peters. Mrs. Peters was looking at her. Quickly they looked away from each other. The outer door opened and Mr. Hale came in.

"I've got the team round now," he said. "Pretty cold out there."

"I'm going to stay here awhile by myself," the county attorney suddenly announced. "You can send Frank out for me, can't you?" he asked the sheriff. "I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied we can't do better."

Again, for one brief moment, the two women's eyes found one another.

The sheriff came up to the table.

"Did you want to see what Mrs. Peters was going to take in?"

The county attorney picked up the apron. He laughed. "Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out."

Mrs. Hale's hand was on the sewing basket in which the box was concealed. She felt that she ought to take her hand off the basket. She did not seem able to. He picked up one of the quilt blocks which she had piled on to cover the box. Her eyes felt like fire. She had a feeling that if he took up the basket she would snatch it from him.

But he did not take it up. With another little laugh, he turned away.

"No; Mrs. Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?"

Mrs. Peters was standing beside the table. Mrs. Hale shot a look up at her; but she could not see her face. Mrs. Peters had turned away. When she spoke, her voice was muffled.

"Not—just that way," she said.

"Married to the law!" chuckled Mrs. Peters' husband. He moved toward the door into the front room, and said to the county attorney:

"I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows."

"Oh—windows," said the county attorney scoffingly.

"We'll be right out, Mr. Hale," said the sheriff to the farmer.

Hale went to look after the horses. The sheriff followed the county attorney into the other room. Again—for one final moment—the two women were alone in that kitchen.

Martha Hale sprang up, her hands tight together, looking at that other woman, with whom it rested. At first she could not see her eyes, for the sheriff's wife had not turned back since she turned away at that suggestion of being married to

the law. But now Mrs. Hale made her turn back. Her eyes made her turn back. Slowly, unwillingly, Mrs. Peters turned her head until her eyes met the eyes of the other woman. There was a moment when they held each other in a steady, burning look in which there was no evasion nor flinching.

Then Martha Hale's eyes pointed the way to the basket in which was hidden the thing that would make certain the conviction of the other woman—that woman who was not there and yet who had been there with them all through that hour.

For a moment Mrs. Peters did not move. And then she did it. With a rush forward, she threw back the quilt pieces, got the box, tried to put it in her handbag. It was too big. Desperately she opened it, started to take the bird out. But there she broke—she could not touch the bird. She stood there helpless, foolish.

There was the sound of a knob turning in the inner door. Martha Hale snatched the box from the sheriff's wife, and got it in the pocket of her big coat just as the sheriff and the county attorney came back.

"Well, Henry," said the county attorney facetiously, "at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?"

Mrs. Hale's hand was against the pocket of her coat.

"We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson."

# Accident



A G A T H A C H R I S T I E

“**A**<sup>ND</sup> I tell you this—it’s the same woman—not a doubt of it!”

Captain Haydock looked into the eager, vehement face of his friend and sighed. He wished Evans would not be so positive and so jubilant. In the course of a career spent at sea, the old sea captain had learned to leave things that did not concern him well alone. His friend Evans, late C.I.D. Inspector, had a different philosophy of life. “Acting on information received—” had been his motto in early days, and he had improved upon it to the extent of finding out his own information. Inspector Evans had been a very smart, wide-awake officer, and had justly earned the promotion which had been his. Even now, when he had retired from the force, and had settled down in the country cottage of his dreams, his professional instinct was still active.

“Don’t often forget a face,” he reiterated complacently. “Mrs. Anthony—yes, it’s Mrs. Anthony right enough. When you said Mrs. Merrowdene—I knew her at once.”

Captain Haydock stirred uneasily. The Merrowdenes were his nearest neighbours, barring Evans himself, and this identifying of Mrs. Merrowdene with a former heroine of a *cause célèbre* distressed him.

“It’s a long time ago,” he said rather weakly.

“Nine years,” said Evans, accurate as ever. “Nine years and three months. You remember the case?”



"In a vague sort of way."

"Anthony turned out to be an arsenic eater," said Evans, "so they acquitted her."

"Well, why shouldn't they?"

"No reason in the world. Only verdict they could give on the evidence. Absolutely correct."

"Then, that's all right," said Haydock. "And I don't see what we're bothering about."

"Who's bothering?"

"I thought you were."

"Not at all."

"The thing's over and done with," summed up the Captain. "If Mrs. Merrowdene at one time of her life was unfortunate enough to be tried and acquitted of murder—"

"It's not usually considered unfortunate to be acquitted," put in Evans.

"You know what I mean," said Captain Haydock, irritably. "If the poor lady has been through that harrowing experience, it's no business of ours to rake it up, is it?"

Evans did not answer.

"Come now, Evans. The lady was innocent—you've just said so."

"I didn't say she was innocent. I said she was acquitted."

"It's the same thing."

"Not always."

Captain Haydock, who had commenced to tap his pipe out against the side of his chair, stopped, and sat up with a very alert expression:

"Hullo-ullo-ullo," he said. "The wind's in that quarter, is it? You think she wasn't innocent?"

"I wouldn't say that. I just—don't know. Anthony was in the habit of taking arsenic. His wife got it for him. One day, by mistake, he takes far too much. Was the mistake his or his wife's? Nobody could tell, and the jury very properly gave her the benefit of the doubt. That's all quite right and I'm not finding fault with it. All the same—I'd like to *know*."

Captain Haydock transferred his attention to his pipe once more.

"Well," he said comfortably. "It's none of our business."

"I'm not so sure. . . ."

"But, surely—"

"Listen to me a minute. This man, Merrowdene—in his laboratory this evening, fiddling round with tests—you remember—"

"Yes. He mentioned Marsh's test for arsenic. Said *you* would know all about it—it was in *your* line—and chuckled. He wouldn't have said that if he'd thought for one moment—"

Evans interrupted him.

"You mean he wouldn't have said that if he *knew*. They've been married how long—six years, you told me? I bet you anything he has no idea his wife is the once notorious Mrs. Anthony."

"And he will certainly not know it from me," said Captain Haydock stiffly.

Evans paid no attention, but went on.

"You interrupted me just now. After Marsh's test, Merrowdene heated a substance in a test tube, the metallic residue he dissolved in water and then precipitated it by adding silver nitrate. That was a test for chlorates. A neat, unassuming little test. But I chanced to read these words in a book that stood open on the table. *H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> decomposes chlorates with evolution of CL<sub>204</sub>. If heated, violent explosions occur, the mixture ought therefore to be kept cool and only very small quantities used.*"

Haydock stared at his friend.

"Well, what about it?"

"Just this. In my profession we've got tests, too—tests for murder. There's adding up the facts—weighing them, dissecting the residue when you've allowed for prejudice and the general inaccuracy of witnesses. But there's another test

for murder—one that is fairly accurate, but rather—dangerous! *A murderer is seldom content with one crime.* Give him time and a lack of suspicion and he'll commit another. You catch a man—has he murdered his wife or hasn't he?—perhaps the case isn't very black against him. Look into his past—if you find that he's had several wives—and that they've all died, shall we say—rather curiously?—then you *know!* I'm not speaking legally, you understand. I'm speaking of moral certainty. Once you *know*, you can go ahead looking for evidence."

"Well?"

"I'm coming to the point. That's all right if there is a past to look into. But suppose you catch your murderer at his or her first crime? Then that test will be one from which you get no reaction. But the prisoner acquitted—starting life under another name. Will or will not the murderer repeat the crime?"

"That's a horrible idea."

"Do you still say it's none of our business?"

"Yes, I do. You've no reason to think that Mrs. Merrowdene is anything but a perfectly innocent woman."

The ex-Inspector was silent for a moment. Then he said slowly:

"I told you that we looked into her past and found nothing. That's not quite true. There was a stepfather. As a girl of eighteen she had a fancy for some young man—and her stepfather exerted his authority to keep them apart. She and her stepfather went for a walk along a rather dangerous part of the cliff. There was an accident—the stepfather went too near the edge—it gave way and he went over and was killed."

"You don't think—"

"It was an accident. *Accident!* Anthony's overdose of arsenic was an accident. She'd never have been tried if it hadn't transpired that there was another man—he sheered off, by

the way. Looked as though he weren't satisfied even if the jury were. I tell you, Haydock, where that woman is concerned I'm afraid of another—accident!"

The old Captain shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I don't know how you're going to guard against that."

"Neither do I," said Evans ruefully.

"I should leave well enough alone," said Captain Haydock. "No good ever came of butting into other people's affairs."

But that advice was not palatable to the ex-Inspector. He was a man of patience but determination. Taking leave of his friend, he sauntered down to the village, revolving in his mind the possibilities of some kind of successful action.

Turning into the post office to buy some stamps, he ran into the object of his solicitude, George Merrowdene. The ex-chemistry professor was a small, dreamy-looking man, gentle and kindly in manner, and usually completely absent-minded. He recognized the other and greeted him amicably, stooping to recover the letters that the impact had caused him to drop on the ground. Evans stooped also and, more rapid in his movements than the other, secured them first, handing them back to their owner with an apology.

He glanced down at them in doing so, and the address on the topmost suddenly awakened all his suspicions anew. It bore the name of a well-known insurance firm.

Instantly his mind was made up. The guileless George Merrowdene hardly realized how it came about that he and the ex-Inspector were strolling down the village together, and still less could he have said how it came about that the conversation should come round to the subject of life insurance.

Evans had no difficulty in attaining his object. Merrowdene of his own accord volunteered the information that he had just insured his life for his wife's benefit, and asked Evans's opinion of the company in question.

"I made some rather unwise investments," he explained.

"As a result, my income has diminished. If anything were to happen to me, my wife would be left very badly off. This insurance will put things right."

"She didn't object to the idea?" inquired Evans casually. "Some ladies do, you know. Feel it's unlucky—that sort of thing."

"Oh! Margaret is very practical," said Merrowdene, smiling. "Not at all superstitious. In fact, I believe it was her idea originally. She didn't like my being so worried."

Evans had got the information he wanted. He left the other shortly afterwards, and his lips were set in a grim line. The late Mr. Anthony had insured his life in his wife's favour a few weeks before his death.

Accustomed to rely on his instincts, he was perfectly sure in his own mind. But how to act was another matter. He wanted, not to arrest a criminal red-handed, but to prevent a crime being committed and that was a very different and a very much more difficult thing.

All day he was very thoughtful. There was a Primrose League Fête that afternoon held in the grounds of the local squire, and he went to it, indulging in the penny dip, guessing the weight of a pig, and shying at coconuts all with the same look of abstracted concentration on his face. He even indulged in half a crown's worth of Zara the Crystal Gazer, smiling a little to himself as he did so, remembering his own activities against fortune-tellers in his official days.

He did not pay very much heed to her sing-song, droning voice till the end of a sentence held his attention.

"—and you will very shortly—very shortly indeed—be engaged on a matter of life or death—life or death to one person."

"Eh—what's that?" he asked abruptly.

"A decision—you have a decision to make. You must be very careful—very, very careful. . . . If you were to make a mistake—the smallest mistake—"

"Yes?"

The fortune-teller shivered. Inspector Evans knew it was all nonsense, but he was nevertheless impressed.

"I warn you—you *must not make a mistake*. If you do, I see the result clearly, a death. . . ."

Odd, damned odd! A death. Fancy her lighting upon that!

"If I make a mistake a death will result? Is that it?"

"Yes."

"In that case," said Evans, rising to his feet and handing over half a crown, "I mustn't make a mistake, eh?"

He spoke lightly enough, but as he went out of the tent, his jaw set determinedly. Easy to say—not so easy to be sure of doing. He mustn't make a slip. A life, a valuable human life depended on it.

And there was no one to help him. He looked across at the figure of his friend Haydock in the distance. No help there. "Leave things alone," was Haydock's motto. And that wouldn't do here.

Haydock was talking to a woman. She moved away from him and came towards Evans, and the Inspector recognized her. It was Mrs. Merrowdene. On an impulse he put himself deliberately in her path.

Mrs. Merrowdene was rather a fine-looking woman. She had a broad serene brow, very beautiful brown eyes, and a placid expression. She had the look of an Italian Madonna which she heightened by parting her hair in the middle and looping it over her ears. She had a deep, rather sleepy voice.

She smiled up at Evans; a contented, welcoming smile.

"I thought it was you, Mrs. Anthony—I mean Mrs. Merrowdene," he said glibly.

He made the slip deliberately, watching her without seeming to do so. He saw her eyes widen, heard the quick intake of her breath. But her eyes did not falter. She gazed at him steadily and proudly.

"I was looking for my husband," she said quietly. "Have you seen him anywhere about?"

"He was over in that direction when I last saw him."

They went side by side in the direction indicated, chatting quietly and pleasantly. The Inspector felt his admiration mounting. What a woman! What self-command. What wonderful poise. A remarkable woman—and a very dangerous one. He felt sure—a very dangerous one.

He still felt very uneasy, though he was satisfied with his initial step. He had let her know that he recognized her. That would put her on her guard. She would not dare attempt anything rash. There was the question of Merrowdene. If he could be warned. . . .

They found the little man absently contemplating a china doll which had fallen to his share in the penny dip. His wife suggested home and he agreed eagerly. Mrs. Merrowdene turned to the Inspector.

“Won’t you come back with us and have a quiet cup of tea, Mr. Evans?”

Was there a faint note of challenge in her voice? He thought there was.

“Thank you, Mrs. Merrowdene. I should like to very much.”

They walked there, talking together of pleasant ordinary things. The sun shone, a breeze blew gently, everything around them was pleasant and ordinary.

Their maid was out at the Fête, Mrs. Merrowdene explained, when they arrived at the charming old-world cottage. She went into her room to remove her hat, returning to set out tea and boil the kettle on a little silver lamp. From a shelf near the fireplace she took three small bowls and saucers.

“We have some very special Chinese tea,” she explained. “And we always drink it in the Chinese manner—out of bowls, not cups.”

She broke off, peered into a cup and exchanged it for another, with an exclamation of annoyance.

“George—it’s too bad of you. You’ve been taking these bowls again.”

"I'm sorry, dear," said the Professor apologetically. "They're such a convenient size. The ones I ordered haven't come."

"One of these days you'll poison us all," said his wife with a half laugh. "Mary finds them in the laboratory and brings them back here and never troubles to wash them out unless they've something very noticeable in them. Why, you were using one of them for Potassium Cyanide the other day. Really, George, it's frightfully dangerous."

Merrowdene looked a little irritated.

"Mary's no business to remove things from the laboratory. She's not to touch anything there."

"But we often leave our teacups there after tea. How is she to know? Be reasonable, dear."

The Professor went into his laboratory, murmuring to himself, and with a smile Mrs. Merrowdene poured boiling water on the tea and blew out the flame of the little silver lamp.

Evans was puzzled. Yet a glimmering of light penetrated to him. For some reason or other, Mrs. Merrowdene was showing her hand. Was this to be the "accident"? Was she speaking of all this so as deliberately to prepare her *alibi* beforehand. So that when, one day, the "accident" happened, he would be forced to give evidence in her favour. Stupid of her, if so, because before that—

Suddenly he drew in his breath. She had poured the tea into the three bowls. One she set before him, one before herself, the other she placed on a little table by the fire near the chair her husband usually sat in, and it was as she placed this last one on the table that a little strange smile curved round her lips. It was the smile that did it.

*He knew!*

A remarkable woman—a dangerous woman. No waiting—no preparation. This afternoon—this very afternoon—with him here as witness. The boldness of it took his breath away.

It was clever—it was damnably clever. He would be able to prove nothing. She counted on his not suspecting—simply



because it was "so soon." A woman of lightning rapidity of thought and action.

He drew a deep breath and leaned forward.

"Mrs. Merrowdene, I'm a man of queer whims. Will you be very kind and indulge me in one of them?"

She looked inquiring but unsuspecting.

He rose, took the bowl from in front of her and crossed to the little table where he substituted it for the other. This other he brought back and placed in front of her.

"I want to see you drink this."

Her eyes met his. They were steady, unfathomable. The colour slowly drained from her face.

She stretched out her hand, raised the cup. He held his breath.

Supposing all along he had made a mistake.

She raised it to her lips—at the last moment, with a shudder she leant forward and quickly poured it into a pot containing a fern. Then she sat back and gazed at him defiantly.

He drew a long sigh of relief, and sat down again.

"Well?" she said.

Her voice had altered. It was slightly mocking—defiant.

He answered her soberly and quietly.

"You are a very clever woman, Mrs. Merrowdene. I think you understand me. There must be no—repetition. You know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean."

Her voice was even, devoid of expression. He nodded his head, satisfied. She was a clever woman, and she didn't want to be hanged.

"To your long life and to that of your husband," he said significantly and raised his tea to his lips.

Then his face changed. It contorted horribly . . . he tried to rise—to cry out. . . . His body stiffened—his face went purple. He fell back sprawling over the chair—his limbs convulsed.

Mrs. Merrowdene leaned forward, watching him. A little smile crossed her lips. She spoke to him—very softly and gently.

“You made a mistake, Mr. Evans. You thought I wanted to kill George. . . . How stupid of you—how very stupid.”

She sat there a minute longer looking at the dead man, the third man who had threatened to cross her path and separate her from the man she loved. . . .

Her smile broadened. She looked more than ever like a Madonna. Then she raised her voice and called.

“George—George. . . . Oh! do come here. I’m afraid there’s been the most dreadful accident. . . . Poor Mr. Evans. . . .”

# *In the Teeth of the Evidence*

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D O R O T H Y   L .   S A Y E R S

“WELL, old son,” said Mr. Lamplough, “and what can we do for you today?”

“Oh, some of your whizz-bang business, I suppose,” said Lord Peter Wimsey, seating himself resentfully in the green velvet torture-chair and making a face in the direction of the drill. “Jolly old left-hand upper grinder come to bits on me. I was only eating an omelette, too. Can’t understand why they always pick these moments. If I’d been cracking nuts or chewing peppermint jumbles I could understand it.”

“Yes?” said Mr. Lamplough, soothingly. He drew an electric bulb, complete with mirror, as though by magic out of a kind of Maskelyne-and-Devant contraption on Lord Peter’s left; a trail of flex followed it, issuing apparently from the bowels of the earth. “Any pain?”

“No *pain*,” said Wimsey, irritably, “unless you count a sharp edge fit to saw your tongue off. Point is, why should it go pop like that? I wasn’t doing anything to it.”

“No?” said Mr. Lamplough, his manner hovering between the professional and the friendly, for he was an old Winchester man and a member of one of Wimsey’s clubs, and had frequently met him on the cricket-field in the days of their youth. “Well, if you’ll stop talking half a moment, we’ll have a look at it. Ah!”

“Don’t say, ‘Ah!’ like that, as if you’d found pyorrhoea and necrosis of the jaw and were gloating over it, you damned

old ghoul. Just carve it out and stop it up and be hanged to you. And, by the way, what have you been up to? Why should I meet an inspector of police on your doorstep? You needn't pretend he came to have his bridgework attended to, because I saw his sergeant waiting for him outside."

"Well, it was rather curious," said Mr. Lamplough, dexterously gagging his friend with one hand and dabbing cotton-wool into the offending cavity with the other. "I suppose I oughtn't to tell you, but if I don't, you'll get it all out of your friends at Scotland Yard. They wanted to see my predecessor's books. Possibly you noticed that bit in the papers about a dental man being found dead in a blazing garage on Wimbledon Common?"

"Yonk—ugh?" said Lord Peter Wimsey.

"Last night," said Mr. Lamplough. "Pooped off about nine pipemma, and it took them three hours to put it out. One of those wooden garages—and the big job was to keep the blaze away from the house. Fortunately it's at the end of the row, with nobody at home. Apparently this man Prendergast was all alone there—just going off for a holiday or something—and he contrived to set himself and his car and his garage alight last night and was burnt to death. In fact, when they found him, he was so badly charred that they couldn't be sure it was he. So, being sticklers for routine, they had a look at his teeth."

"Oh, yes?" said Wimsey, watching Mr. Lamplough fitting a new drill into its socket. "Didn't anybody have a go at putting the fire out?"

"Oh, yes—but as it was a wooden shed, full of petrol, it simply went up like a bonfire. Just a little bit over this way, please. That's splendid." Gr-r-r, whizz, gr-r-r. "As a matter of fact, they seem to think it might just possibly be suicide. The man's married, with three children, and immured and all that sort of thing." Whizz, gr-r-r, buzz, gr-r-r, whizz. "His family's down at Worthing, staying with his mother-in-law or something. Tell me if I hurt you." Gr-r-r. "And I don't sup-

pose he was doing any too well. Still, of course, he may easily have had an accident when filling up. I gather he was starting off that night to join them."

"A—ow—oo—oo—uh—ih—ih?" inquired Wimsey naturally enough.

"How do I come into it?" said Mr. Lamplough, who, from long experience was expert in the interpretation of mumbings. "Well, only because the chap whose practice I took over here did this fellow Prendergast's dental work for him." Whizz. "He died, but left his books behind him for my guidance, in case any of his old patients should feel inclined to trust me." Gr-r-r, whizz. "I'm sorry. Did you feel that? As a matter of fact, some of them actually do. I suppose it's an instinct to trundle round to the same old place when you're in pain, like the dying elephants. Will you rinse, please?"

"I see," said Wimsey, when he had finished washing out chips of himself and exploring his ravaged molar with his tongue. "How odd it is that these cavities always seem so large. I feel as if I could put my head into this one. Still, I suppose you know what you're about. And are Prendergast's teeth all right?"

"Haven't had time to hunt through the ledger, yet, but I've said I'll go down to have a look at them as soon as I've finished with you. It's my lunch-time anyway, and my two o'clock patient isn't coming, thank goodness. She usually brings five spoilt children, and they all want to sit round and watch, and play with the apparatus. One of them got loose last time and tried to electrocute itself on the X-ray plant next door. And she thinks that children should be done at half-price. A little wider if you can manage it." Gr-r-r. "Yes, that's very nice. Now we can dress that and put in a temporary. Rinse, please."

"Yes," said Wimsey, "and for goodness' sake make it firm and not too much of your foul oil of cloves. I don't want bits to come out in the middle of dinner. You can't imagine the nastiness of caviar flavoured with cloves."

"No?" said Mr. Lamplough. "You may find this a little cold." Squirt, swish. "Rinse, please. You may notice it when the dressing goes in. Oh, you did notice it? Good. That shows that the nerve's all right. Only a little longer now. There! Yes, you may get down now. Another rinse? Certainly. When would you like to come in again?"

"Don't be silly, old horse," said Wimsey. "I am coming out to Wimbledon with you straight away. You'll get there twice as fast if I drive you. I've never had a corpse-in-blazing-garage before, and I want to learn."

There is nothing really attractive about corpses in blazing garages. Even Wimsey's war experience did not quite reconcile him to the object that lay on the mortuary slab in the police station. Charred out of all resemblance to humanity, it turned even the police surgeon pale, while Mr. Lamplough was so overcome that he had to lay down the books he had brought with him and retire into the open to recover himself. Meanwhile Wimsey, having put himself on terms of mutual confidence and esteem with the police officials, thoughtfully turned over the little pile of blackened odds and ends that represented the contents of Mr. Prendergast's pockets. There was nothing remarkable about them. The leather note-case still held the remains of a thickish wad of notes—doubtless cash in hand for the holiday at Worthing. The handsome gold watch (obviously a presentation) had stopped at seven minutes past nine. Wimsey remarked on its good state of preservation. Sheltered between the left arm and the body—that seemed to be the explanation.

"Looks as though the first sudden blaze had regularly overcome him," said the police inspector. "He evidently made no attempt to get out. He'd simply fallen forward over the wheel, with his head on the dashboard. That's why the face is so disfigured. I'll show you the remains of the car presently if you're interested, my lord. If the other gentleman's feeling better we may as well take the body first."

Taking the body was a long and unpleasant job. Mr.

Lamplough, nerving himself with an effort and producing a pair of forceps and a probe, went gingerly over the jaws—reduced almost to their bony structure by the furnace heat to which they had been exposed—while the police surgeon checked entries in the ledger. Mr. Prendergast had a dental history extending back over ten years in the ledger, and had already had two or three fillings done before that time. These had been noted at the time when he first came to Mr. Lamplough's predecessor.

At the end of a long examination, the surgeon looked up from the notes he had been making.

"Well, now," he said, "let's check that again. Allowing for renewal of old work, I think we've got a pretty accurate picture of the present state of his mouth. There ought to be nine fillings in all. Small amalgam filling in right lower back wisdom tooth; big amalgam ditto in right lower back molar; amalgam fillings in right upper first and second bicuspid at point of contact; right upper incisor crowned—that all right?"

"I expect so," said Mr. Lamplough, "except that the right upper incisor seems to be missing altogether, but possibly the crown came loose and fell out." He probed delicately. "The jaw is very brittle—I can't make anything of the canal—but there's nothing against it."

"We may find the crown in the garage," suggested the Inspector.

"Fused porcelain filling in left upper canine," went on the surgeon; "amalgam fillings in left upper first bicuspid and lower second bicuspid and left lower thirteen-year-old molar. That seems to be all. No teeth missing and no artificials. How old was this man, Inspector?"

"About forty-five, Doc."

"My age. I only wish I had as good a set of teeth," said the surgeon. Mr. Lamplough agreed with him.

"Then I take it, this is Mr. Prendergast all right," said the Inspector.

"Not a doubt of it, I should say," replied Mr. Lamplough; "though I should like to find that missing crown."

"We'd better go round to the house, then," said the Inspector. "Well, yes, thank you, my lord, I shouldn't mind a lift in that. Some car. Well, the only point now is, whether it was accident or suicide. Round to the right, my lord, and then second on the left—I'll tell you as we go."

"A bit out of the way for a dental man," observed Mr. Lamplough, as they emerged upon some scattered houses near the Common.

The Inspector made a grimace.

"I thought the same, sir, but it appears Mrs. Prendergast persuaded him to come here. So good for the children. Not so good for the practice, though. If you ask me, I should say Mrs. P. was the biggest argument we have for suicide. Here we are."

The last sentence was scarcely necessary. There was a little crowd about the gate of a small detached villa at the end of a row of similar houses. From a pile of dismal debris in the garden a smell of burning still rose, disgustingly. The Inspector pushed through the gate with his companions, pursued by the comments of the bystanders.

"That's the Inspector . . . that's Dr. Maggs . . . that'll be another doctor, him with the little bag . . . who's the bloke in the eye-glass? . . . Looks a proper nobleman, don't he, Florrie? . . . Why, he'll be the insurance bloke. . . . Cool! look at his grand car . . . that's where the money goes. . . . That's a Rolls, that is . . . no, silly, it's a Daimler. . . . Ow, well, it's all advertisement these days."

Wimsey giggled indecorously all the way up the garden path. The sight of the skeleton car amid the sodden and fire-blackened remains of the garage sobered him. Two police constables, crouched over the ruin with a sieve, stood up and saluted.

"How are you getting on, Jenkins?"

"Haven't got anything very much yet, sir, bar an ivory



cigarette-holder. This gentleman"—indicating a stout, bald man in spectacles, who was squatting among the damaged coach-work, "is Mr. Tolley, from the motor-works, come with a note from the Superintendent, sir."

"Ah, yes. Can you give any opinion about this, Mr. Tolley? Dr. Maggs you know. Mr. Lamplough, Lord Peter Wimsey. By the way, Jenkins, Mr. Lamplough has been going into the corpse's dentistry, and he's looking for a lost tooth. You might see if you can find it. Now, Mr. Tolley?"

"Can't see much doubt about how it happened," said Mr. Tolley, picking his teeth thoughtfully. "Regular death-traps, these little saloons, when anything goes wrong unexpectedly. There's a front tank, you see, and it looks as though there might have been a bit of a leak behind the dash somewhere. Possibly the seam of the tank had got strained a bit, or the union had come loose. It's loose now, as a matter of fact, but that's not unusual after a fire, Rouse case or no Rouse case. You can get quite a lot of slow dripping from a damaged tank or pipe, and there seems to have been a coconut mat round the controls, which would prevent you from noticing. There'd be a smell, of course, but these little garages do often get to smell of petrol, and he kept several cans of the stuff here. More than the legal amount—but *that's* not unusual either. Looks to me as though he'd filled up his tank—there are two empty tins near the bonnet, with the caps loose—got in, shut the door, started up the car, perhaps, and then lit a cigarette. Then, if there were any petrol fumes about from a leak, the whole show would go up in his face—whoosh!"

"How was the ignition?"

"Off. He may never have switched it on, but it's quite likely he switched it off again when the flames went up. Silly thing to do, but lots of people *do* do it. The proper thing, of course, is to switch off the petrol and leave the engine running so as to empty the carburettor, but you don't always think straight when you're being burnt alive. Or he may have meant to turn off the petrol and been overcome before he

could manage it. The tank's over here to the left, you see."

"On the other hand," said Wimsey, "he may have committed suicide and faked the accident."

"Nasty way of committing suicide."

"Suppose he'd taken poison first."

"He'd have had to stay alive long enough to fire the car."

"That's true. Suppose he'd shot himself—would the flash from the—no, that's silly—you'd have found the weapon in the case. Or a hypodermic? Same objection. Prussic acid might have done it—I mean, he might just have had time to take a tablet and then fire the car. Prussic acid's pretty quick, but it isn't absolutely instantaneous."

"I'll have a look for it, anyway," said Dr. Maggs.

They were interrupted by the constable.

"Excuse me, sir, but I think we've found the tooth. Mr. Lamplough says this is it."

Between his pudgy finger and thumb he held up a small, bony object, from which a small stalk of metal still protruded.

"That's a right upper incisor crown all right by the look of it," said Mr. Lamplough. "I suppose the cement gave way with the heat. Some cements are sensitive to heat, some, on the other hand, to damp. Well, that settles it, doesn't it?"

"Yes—well, we shall have to break it to the widow. Not that she can be in very much doubt, I imagine."

Mrs. Prendergast—a very much made-up lady with a face set in lines of habitual peevishness—received the news with a burst of loud sobs. She informed them, when she was sufficiently recovered, that Arthur had always been careless about petrol, that he smoked too much, that she had often warned him about the danger of small saloons, that she had told him he ought to get a bigger car, that the one he had was not really large enough for her and the whole family, that he *would* drive at night, though she had always said it was dangerous, and that if he'd listened to her, it would never have happened.

"Poor Arthur was not a good driver. Only last week, when he was taking us down to Worthing, he drove the car right up on a bank in trying to pass a lorry, and frightened us all dreadfully."

"Ah!" said the Inspector. "No doubt that's how the tank got strained." Very cautiously he inquired whether Mr. Prendergast could have had any reason for taking his own life. The widow was indignant. It was true that the practice had been declining of late, but Arthur would never have been so wicked as to do such a thing. Why, only three months ago, he had taken out a life-insurance for £500 and he'd never have invalidated it by committing suicide within the term stipulated by the policy. Inconsiderate of her as Arthur was, and whatever injuries he had done her as a wife, he wouldn't rob his innocent children.

The Inspector pricked up his ears at the word "injuries." What injuries?

Oh, well, of course, she'd known all the time that Arthur was carrying on with that Mrs. Fielding. You couldn't deceive her with all this stuff about teeth needing continual attention. And it was all very well to say that Mrs. Fielding's house was better run than her own. *That* wasn't surprising—a rich widow with no children and no responsibilities, of course she could afford to have everything nice. You couldn't expect a busy wife to do miracles on such a small housekeeping allowance. If Arthur had wanted things different, he should have been more generous, and it was easy enough for Mrs. Fielding to attract men, dressed up like a fashion-plate and no better than she should be. She'd told Arthur that if it didn't stop she'd divorce him. And since then he'd taken to spending all his evenings in Town, and what was he doing there—

The Inspector stemmed the torrent by asking for Mrs. Fielding's address.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mrs. Prendergast. "She did live at Number 57, but she went abroad after I made it clear

I wasn't going to stand any more of it. It's very nice to be some people, with plenty of money to spend. I've never been abroad since our honeymoon, and that was only to Boulogne."

At the end of this conversation, the Inspector sought Dr. Maggs and begged him to be thorough in his search for prussic acid.

The remaining testimony was that of Gladys, the general servant. She had left Mr. Prendergast's house the day before at 6 o'clock. She was to have taken a week's holiday while the Prendergasts were at Worthing. She had thought that Mr. Prendergast had seemed worried and nervous the last few days, but that had not surprised her, because she knew he disliked staying with his wife's people. She (Gladys) had finished her work and put out a cold supper and then gone home with her employer's permission. He had a patient—a gentleman from Australia, or some such a place, who wanted his teeth attended to in a hurry before going off on his travels again. Mr. Prendergast had explained that he would be working late, and would shut up the house himself, and she need not wait. Further inquiry showed that Mr. Prendergast had "scarcely touched" his supper, being, presumably, in a hurry to get off. Apparently, then, the patient had been the last person to see Mr. Prendergast alive.

The dentist's appointment-book was next examined. The patient figured there as "Mr. Williams 5.30," and the address-book placed Mr. Williams at a small hotel in Bloomsbury. The manager of the hotel said that Mr. Williams had stayed there for a week. He had given no address except "Adelaide," and had mentioned that he was revisiting the old country for the first time after twenty years and had no friends in London. Unfortunately, he could not be interviewed. At about half-past ten the previous night, a messenger had called, bringing his card, to pay his bill and remove his luggage. No address had been left for forwarding letters. It was not a district messenger, but a man in a slouch hat and heavy dark

overcoat. The night-porter had not seen his face very clearly, as only one light was on in the hall. He had told them to hurry up, as Mr. Williams wanted to catch the boat-train from Waterloo. Inquiry at the booking-office showed that a Mr. Williams had actually travelled on that train, being booked to Paris. The ticket had been taken that same night. So Mr. Williams had disappeared into the blue, and even if they could trace him, it seemed unlikely that he could throw much light on Mr. Prendergast's state of mind immediately previous to the disaster. It seemed a little odd, at first, that Mr. Williams, from Adelaide, staying in Bloomsbury, should have travelled to Wimbledon to get his teeth attended to, but the simple explanation was the likeliest: namely, that the friendless Williams had struck up an acquaintance with Prendergast in a café or some such place, and that a casual mention of his dental necessities had led to a project of mutual profit and assistance.

After which, nothing seemed to be left but for the coroner to bring in a verdict of Death by Misadventure and for the widow to send in her claim to the Insurance Company, when Dr. Maggs upset the whole scheme of things by announcing that he had discovered traces of a large injection of hyoscine in the body, and what about it? The Inspector, on hearing this, observed callously that he was not surprised. If ever a man had an excuse for suicide, he thought it was Mrs. Prendergast's husband. He thought that it would be desirable to make a careful search among the scorched laurels surrounding what had been Mr. Prendergast's garage. Lord Peter Wimsey agreed, but committed himself to the prophecy that the syringe would not be found.

Lord Peter Wimsey was entirely wrong. The syringe was found next day, in a position suggesting that it had been thrown out of the window of the garage after use. Traces of the poison were discovered to be present in it. "It's a slow-working drug," observed Dr. Maggs. "No doubt he jabbed himself, threw the syringe away, hoping it would never be

looked for, and then, before he lost consciousness, climbed into the car and set light to it. A clumsy way of doing it."

"A damned ingenious way of doing it," said Wimsey. "I don't believe in that syringe, somehow." He rang up his dentist. "Lamplough, old horse," he said, "I wish you'd do something for me. I wish you'd go over those teeth again. No—not my teeth; Prendergast's."

"Oh, blow it!" said Mr. Lamplough, uneasily.

"No, but I wish you would," said his lordship.

The body was still unburied. Mr. Lamplough, grumbling very much, went down to Wimbledon with Wimsey, and again went through his distasteful task. This time he started on the left side.

"Lower thirteen-year-old molar and second bicuspid filled amalgam. The fire's got at those a bit, but they're all right. First upper bicuspid—bicuspids are stupid sort of teeth—always the first to go. That filling looks to have been rather carelessly put in—not what I should call good work; it seems to extend over the next tooth—possibly the fire did that. Left upper canine, cast porcelain filling on anterior face—"

"Half a jiff," said Wimsey, "Maggs' note says 'fused porcelain.' Is it the same thing?"

"No. Different process. Well, I suppose it's fused porcelain—difficult to see. I should have said it was cast, myself, but that's as may be."

"Let's verify it in the ledger. I wish Maggs had put the dates in—goodness knows how far I shall have to hunt back, and I don't understand this chap's writing or his dashed abbreviations."

"You won't have to go back very far if it's cast. The stuff only came in about 1928, from America. There was quite a rage for it then, but for some reason it didn't take on extraordinarily well over here. But some men use it."

"Oh, then it isn't cast," said Wimsey. "There's nothing here about canines, back to '28. Let's make sure; '27, '26, '25, '24, '23. Here you are. Canine, something or other."

"That's it," said Lamplough, coming to look over his shoulder. "Fused porcelain. I must be wrong, then. Easily see by taking it out. The grain's different, and so is the way it's put in."

"How, different?"

"Well," said Mr. Lamplough, "one's a cast, you see."

"And the other's fused. I did grasp that much. Well, go ahead and take it out."

"Can't very well; not here."

"Then take it home and do it there. Don't you see, Lamplough, how important it is? If it is cast porcelain, or whatever you call it, it *can't* have been done in '23. And if it was removed later, then another dentist must have done it. And he may have done other things—and in that case, those things ought to be there, and they're not. Don't you *see*?"

"I see you're getting rather agitated," said Mr. Lamplough; "all I can say is, I refuse to have this thing taken along to my surgery. Corpses aren't popular in Harley Street."

In the end, the body was removed, by permission, to the dental department of the local hospital. Here Mr. Lamplough, assisted by the staff dental expert, Dr. Maggs, and the police, delicately extracted the filling from the canine.

"If that," said he triumphantly, "is not cast porcelain I will extract all my own teeth without an anaesthetic and swallow them. What do you say, Benton?"

The hospital dentist agreed with him. Mr. Lamplough, who had suddenly developed an eager interest in the problem, nodded, and inserted a careful probe between the upper right bicuspid, with their adjacent fillings.

"Come and look at this, Benton. Allowing for the action of the fire and all this muck, wouldn't you have said this was a very recent filling? There, at the point of contact. Might have been done yesterday. And—here—wait a minute. Where's the lower jaw gone to? Get that fitted up. Give me a bit of carbon. Look at the tremendous bite there ought to be here, with that big molar coming down on to it. That filling's

miles too high for the job. Wimsey—when was this bottom right-hand back molar filled?”

“Two years ago,” said Wimsey.

“That’s impossible,” said the two dentists together, and Mr. Benton added:

“If you clean away the mess, you’ll see it’s a new filling. Never been bitten on, I should say. Look here, Mr. Lamplough, there’s something odd here.”

“Odd? I should say there was. I never thought about it when I was checking it up yesterday, but look at this old cavity in the lateral here. Why didn’t he have that filled when all this other work was done? Now it’s cleaned out you can see it plainly. Have you got a long probe? It’s quite deep and must have given him jip. I say, Inspector, I want to have some of these fillings out. Do you mind?”

“Go ahead,” said the Inspector, “we’ve got plenty of witnesses.”

With Mr. Benton supporting the grisly patient and Mr. Lamplough manipulating the drill, the filling of one of the molars was speedily drilled out, and Mr. Lamplough said: “Oh, gosh!”—which, as Lord Peter remarked, just showed you what a dentist meant when he said “Ah!”

“Try the bicuspid,” suggested Mr. Benton.

“Or this thirteen-year-old,” chimed in his colleague.

“Hold hard, gentlemen,” protested the Inspector, “don’t spoil the specimen altogether.”

Mr. Lamplough drilled away without heeding him. Another filling came out, and Mr. Lamplough said “Gosh!” again.

“It’s all right,” said Wimsey, grinning, “you can get out your warrant, Inspector.”

“What’s that, my lord?”

“Murder,” said Wimsey.

“Why?” said the Inspector. “Do these gentlemen mean that Mr. Prendergast got a new dentist who poisoned his teeth for him?”



"No," said Mr. Lamplough; "at least, not what you mean by poisoning. But I've never seen such work in my life. Why, in two places the man hasn't even troubled to clear out the decay at all. He's just enlarged the cavity and stopped it up again anyhow. Why this chap didn't get thundering abscesses I don't know."

"Perhaps," said Wimsey, "the stoppings were put in too recently. Hullo! what now?"

"This one's all right. No decay here. Doesn't look as if there ever had been, either. But one can't tell about that."

"I dare say there never was. Get your warrant out, Inspector."

"For the murder of Mr. Prendergast? And against whom?"

"No. Against Arthur Prendergast for the murder of one, Mr. Williams, and, incidentally, for arson and attempted fraud. And against Mrs. Fielding too, if you like, for conspiracy. Though you mayn't be able to prove that part of it."

It turned out, when they found Mr. Prendergast in Rouen, that he had thought out the scheme well in advance. The one thing he had had to wait for had been to find a patient of his own height and build, with a good set of teeth and few home ties. When the unhappy Williams had fallen into his clutches, he had few preparations to make. Mrs. Prendergast had to be packed off to Worthing—a journey she was ready enough to take at any time—and the maid given a holiday. Then the necessary dental accessories had to be prepared and the victim invited out to tea at Wimbledon. Then the murder—a stunning blow from behind, followed by an injection. Then, the slow and horrid process of faking the teeth to correspond with Mr. Prendergast's own. Next, the exchange of clothes and the body carried down and placed in the car. The hypodermic put where it might be overlooked on a casual inspection and yet might plausibly be found if the presence of the drug should be discovered; ready, in the one case, to support a verdict of Accident and, in the second, of

Suicide. Then the car soaked in petrol, the union loosened, the cans left about. The garage door and window left open, to lend colour to the story and provide a draught, and, finally, light set to the car by means of a train of petrol laid through the garage door. Then, flight to the station through the winter darkness and so by underground to London. The risk of being recognised on the underground was small, in Williams's hat and clothes and with a scarf wound about the lower part of the face. The next step was to pick up Williams's luggage and take the boat-train to join the wealthy and enamoured Mrs. Fielding in France. After which, Williams and Mrs. Williams could have returned to England, or not, as they pleased.

"Quite a student of criminology," remarked Wimsey, at the conclusion of this little adventure. "He'd studied Rouse and Furnace all right, and profited by their mistakes. Pity he overlooked that matter of the cast porcelain. Makes a quicker job, does it, Lamplough? Well, more haste, less speed. I do wonder, though, at what point of the proceedings Williams actually died."

"Shut up," said Mr. Lamplough, "and, by the way, I've still got to finish that filling for you."

# Green Ice



**S T U A R T   P A L M E R**

**F**EW and far between were the passers-by on Manhattan's Fifty-seventh Street that rainy Saturday afternoon, but still not few enough for the purpose of the man in the tan raincoat. He loitered until the glint of brass buttons had disappeared inside the cigar store on the corner, and then pulled his hat over his eyes and strolled casually toward the glittering windows of Vanderbock et Cie., Jewelers, Founded Paris 1890.

He paused there briefly, and then passed hurriedly on, leaving behind him one neatly-wrapped brick, one smashed plate glass window, and no diamonds.

As the burglar alarms let go with a nerve-paralyzing clatter, the man in the raincoat ran out into the street and leaped lightly to the side of a small shiny roadster which happened to be rolling conveniently along there, driven by what was later described as "a blonde dame with sun-glasses." The roadster picked up speed, but then from the cigar store on the corner rushed a uniformed officer, shouting "Halt!" and fumbling with the catch of his holster. There was the sharp dry slap of a pistol shot. Brass buttons collapsed on the wet pavement, and with a screech of tortured rubber the car rounded the corner and disappeared north toward the park.

The burglar alarms continued, and then the wail of sirens swelled the ear-splitting din. A radio car slammed on its brakes beside the crumpled figure in the gutter, but the doctor who jumped down out of the following ambulance

shook his head and said, "Dead on arrival." Fifty-seventh Street drama was now only another paragraph on the police teletype.

Humanity appeared in considerable numbers, blocking the street and trampling in the broken glass outside the jewelers' window. Precinct detectives were very busy, and then stood back as a sharp-nosed lieutenant from Uptown robbery detail took charge. And finally nothing less than a big black limousine from Headquarters appeared, from which climbed a wiry, gray little Irishman with a gold badge cupped in his right hand. The murder of a police officer in the line of duty is taken very seriously by the force.

The lieutenant, who had been staring gloomily into the looted window, now turned and saluted. "Grosskopf, lieutenant—robbery detail," he introduced himself.

"Inspector Piper. And Sergeant Mains," said the man from downtown, waving at the curly-headed but extremely serious youngster who had driven the car. "We're only kibitzing, lieutenant. Go right ahead."

"It's simple smash-and-grab," the lieutenant said. "Like the other cases we've been having. Only this time old Sam Bodley had to get blasted as they were making their getaway."

"Some day these jewelers will learn to use safety glass," Piper observed. "Any witnesses?"

Lieutenant Grosskopf shrugged, and pointed inside the store. "There's the doorman at Carnegie, and a dame," he said, making it clear that he was unimpressed with the showing. The Inspector moved toward the door, and then winced as a clear and familiar feminine voice sounded above the noise of the crowd.

"Yoo hoo! Oscar!"

The Inspector turned, as if to seek shelter, but it was too late. Pushing through the ranks of the curious, ducking beneath the rope barrier to the detriment of her somewhat amazing hat, came a lean, angular lady brandishing a black cotton umbrella. "Oscar, I simply *must* tell you—"

"Oh, it's you!" muttered the Inspector, without enthusiasm, as he turned to face Miss Hildegard Withers. "You know, someday I'm going to smash that radio of yours, so help me."

"I wasn't listening in on your old police calls," snapped the maiden schoolteacher indignantly. "I was right here in the neighborhood, shopping for an apartment, and I heard the sirens . . ."

"All right, all right," he told her. "Run along." Lieutenant Grosskopf now interrupted, bearing a brick partially wrapped in white tissue paper, with festive red string and gilt stickers. "That's what the guy used, eh?" Piper took the brick, hefted it, and then handed it into the custody of the handsome young sergeant, in spite of Miss Withers' obvious interest. "Stop trying to act like a detective, Hildegard," Piper went on. "There's no tracing a used brick."

He passed on inside the jewelry store, intent upon finding the witnesses to the crime. The sergeant followed, with notebook in readiness, and Miss Withers, trying to look as much like the Invisible Man as possible, tagged along.

There wasn't too much to be got from the witnesses. John Asch, doorman at Carnegie Hall, had heard the alarms and the shot, and had looked down the street in time to glimpse the departing roadster, which he thought was a 1938 Ford coupé. "It all happened so quick!" he complained. "A blonde dame with goggles was driving."

Miss Marcia Lee Smith, who admitted that she was late of Savannah, Georgia, and now in New York to take up the study of the violin, was making the most of her adventure. "I was jus' walking along the street, to save taxi fare, you know, and I heard a great tremendous crash and the alarms and everything. I looked up and there was a man—a great, tall, dark man, sort of foreign-looking—and he ran out into the street and jumped in the car and away they went. Ooh, was I scared!"

Marcia Lee's round young shoulders shivered deliciously

to indicate how scared she had been. She was doubtful about the make of the car, but very positive about her description of the bandit. "He was awful tall—taller even than this gentleman heah," she insisted, looking up at Sergeant Mains and letting her lashes fall across her dimpled cheek.

"Okay, folks. Leave your names and addresses with the Sarge, and then you can go." Inspector Piper turned away, then suddenly confronted Miss Hildegarde Withers. "Now what are you sleuthing at?" he demanded. "I thought I told you—"

"Nothing, Oscar. Nothing at all," she insisted. Which was mostly true. It had occurred to her that the sergeant ought to be taking Marcia Lee Smith's address and telephone number down in his official notebook instead of in the little red address book which he had produced from an inner pocket, but that was nobody's business but his own.

The last witness to be interviewed was the Vanderbock in charge of the store, a dapper, narrow-shouldered young man in spats, who had been the only one in the place to have even a fleeting glimpse of the bandit, and who seemed very vague about that.

"I was in the rear of the store with the staff, making plans for the anniversary sale tomorrow," he admitted. "I heard the tinkle of glass, and looked up to see a man—a man with a hat—grabbing things out of the display window. Then he was gone." Vanderbock shrugged. "Anyway, the most valuable piece in the window, a flawless 25-carat emerald ring, was overlooked by the thief. And the diamonds he took were fully insured."

"Funny he left that 25-carat hunk of green ice," said Piper worriedly. "Okay. Make out a complete list and description of the missing stones." He turned. "Hey, Sarge!"

"I'll be glad to take down the list," Miss Withers hastily offered. "The sergeant is busy."

The Inspector's temper was short today. "Relax, Hildegardel!" he ordered, gesturing toward the door with his thumb. "Sergeant!"

"But Oscar, I've something—" the maiden schoolteacher tried to continue.

"Later, Hildegard! Run along now." And the Inspector turned his back on her. Miss Withers sniffed, shrugged, and marched toward the door.

"Sergeant, if you're through with the witnesses, will you take down this list of stolen property?" the Inspector was saying. Then he was interrupted by a policeman, who brought word that the Commissioner was on the phone.

"There it starts!" moaned Oscar Piper. He looked around, thinking fast. "Oh—tell him I've just left." And he started for the door, pausing only long enough to tell the sergeant that he would be at the drug store up the street, and that no, it would not be necessary to drive witness Marcia Lee Smith home in the Headquarters limousine.

The Inspector caught Miss Withers on the sidewalk, a very ruffled Miss Withers indeed. "Okay, Hildegard," he apologized. "I'll buy you a cup of coffee to make up for throwing you out. Only it makes us all short-tempered to have anything like this happen. A cop shot down in his tracks—and we don't know a thing about the guy who did it."

"No, Oscar?" Only slightly mollified, Miss Withers sank down on a stool in the drug store. "How about the witnesses?"

"Worthless," he told her. "You know yourself that nine witnesses out of ten make up a long story about the tall dark foreign-looking man . . ." She nodded, and he went on. "So we start from nowhere."

"Knowing nothing about the bandit," Miss Withers said thoughtfully as she looked into her coffee cup, "nothing except that he is a man between thirty and forty years of age, about five feet six inches tall, wears a light tan raincoat and a dark hat, is an experienced crook known to the police, and is new to the jewel racket. And that he is an egomaniac with a twisted sense of humor. That's all?"

The Inspector's cup clattered in its saucer. "What?"

"Elementary, my dear Oscar. Who else but an egomaniac

would wrap the brick as a gift, with 'Happy Birthday' stickers on it, just because it was the jewelry store's fiftieth anniversary? He was an experienced crook because of the neatness and swiftness of the job. Wanted by the police—or else he wouldn't have been desperate enough to shoot his way clear. A first offender asks for mercy and a light sentence. And the bandit is new to the jewel trade, or he wouldn't have missed the big emerald. See?"

Piper nodded slowly. "Shrewd guessing. But the rest of it—his height and age and so on . . ."

"I know that," Miss Withers confessed, "because I *looked*. I came around the corner just as the killer jumped for his car. Oh, don't look at me that way. I tried to tell you. Anyway, no man over forty is spry enough to jump as he jumped. I didn't see his face, or the driver's, because they were headed the other way. But I saw his height, and he was no giant."

"Not bad, Hildegard, not bad at all," Oscar Piper was forced to confess. "Now if you could work out a trap to catch him . . ."

"Why not an officer in every jewelry store—or staked out across the street?"

Piper shook his head. "They'd scare him off. I don't just want to stop this series of robberies, I want to get the man who shot Sam Bodley. He'll probably strike again—at some one of the big jewelry stores of upper Fifth or Madison or this street." Suddenly the Inspector snapped his fingers. "I've got it! The really important jewelry stores are all within a ten-block area. Tiffany's, Black Starr Frost and so forth—all of them. Each store has alarm wires to the protective association. We'll reroute those wires straight to the radio dispatcher at Headquarters. Plant men in radio cars, motorcycle units, and stakeouts so that thirty seconds after the next smash and grab alarm we have a police cordon drawn tight around the whole section. Nobody gets out, nobody gets in. We tighten the cordon, search everybody, watch for a known



crook or somebody acting suspicious." He grinned. "It's a sort of dragnet."

"Or a grab-bag," said the schoolteacher. "There'll be complaints."

"But we'll nab the killer of Sam Bodley." Pleased to think that at last he had something concrete to suggest to the Commissioner, Oscar Piper borrowed a nickel from Miss Withers and headed for the nearest phone booth.

He was less pleased next morning when he picked up the paper and read the story beneath the banner head "COP-KILLER STILL AT LARGE." It was not that the newspaper story was in error. They had everything, from the photograph of old Sam Bodley face-down in the street to an artist's re-creation of the killer, from Marcia Lee Smith's description. They poked fun at the bandit for taking the diamonds and missing the more valuable emerald. But the story ended with a complete explanation of the "dragnet," which the police were planning to try.

His cigar suddenly went stale in his mouth. A lot of good the dragnet would do, with the quarry forewarned. Oscar Piper shook his head. It was the first time his old friend and sparring-partner had let him down. So Hildegard had to go and talk in front of the reporters!

He reached savagely across his desk and tore off the top sheet of his calendar pad, on which he had written "call Hildegard re: dinner." The rest of the day Piper devoted to perfecting the dragnet plan, for lack of a better idea. When, toward five, Miss Withers called on the phone, he sent word that he was tied up.

A rare thing it was for the normally sunny Inspector to carry a grudge overnight, but this one grew and flourished. Over his desk was pinned the picture of Sam Bodley lying dead in the gutter, and that didn't help. Nor did his temper take a turn for the better when two days later, dressed in unaccustomed black, he sat in the funeral parlors with a delega-

tion from Headquarters and heard the last prayers for Sam Bodley. During a lull in the ceremony a well-meaning captain—old Judd from Missing Persons—leaned over and whispered, "If you're still stymied on this case, why don't you call in that schoolma'am pal of yours? She was a ball of fire on that last job." Piper nearly bit him.

On Monday, four days after the shattering of the jewelers' window, Miss Withers marched down Fifty-seventh Street again. She noted in passing that Vanderbock's window was repaired, and that again its glittering treasures tempted the public, even to the big green emerald ring in the center of the display.

But she had other things on her mind besides trying to help a stubborn, pig-headed Irishman out of his muddle. If he wanted to play that way, so be it. She was determined on the business in hand, which was to find an unfurnished apartment within her means and near the Sixth Avenue subway.

There was a remodelled brownstone just around the corner from Fifty-seventh which had caught her eye just before the shriek of the sirens had led her astray the other day. Now she retraced her steps, came up past the neatly lettered sign "Unfurnished apartments—newly decorated—agent on premises." The door was open, and the lower hall disclosed a jumble of painters' ladders, wallpaper rolls, kegs and tubs and buckets of paint, and all the canvas, plaster, plumbing equipment which could be imagined.

In the midst of all this stood a young girl. She and Miss Withers spoke together, in one voice: "I'm looking for an apartment—are you the agent?" They stopped, blinked, and smiled. Then the girl cocked her head. "Why—I remember *you!*"

It was Marcia Lee Smith, the star witness who had actually seen the jewel bandit in the act of departing. They discussed the coincidence of meeting like this. "After all,"

Marcia Lee said, "it's the only attractive building around here with any vacancies. I was out looking the other day, when it all happened."

She had been waiting here some time, hoping for the rental agent to show up. There was a sign on the door, "Gone to lunch, back in half an hour," but it didn't say half an hour from any set time. "Anyway," said Miss Withers, "I don't need a rental agent to tell me whether or not I like an apartment. I'm going upstairs."

Marcia Lee tagged along. She was living now at the Martha Washington, but she hoped to find an apartment where she could entertain. "Entertain good-looking young detective sergeants?" Miss Withers pressed, and struck home, because the girl came as near to blushing as girls ever come nowadays. They poked through the second floor apartment, praised the new venetian blinds, the wide fireplace, the big shining refrigerator which, Marcia Lee pointed out, would make sixty-four ice cubes at once.

The schoolteacher liked everything except the walls, which were a somewhat glaring shade of ivory. "It should be a rather quiet apartment, too," she pointed out. "Set well back. . . ."

It was not a quiet apartment at the moment, because the sirens were howling again. A radio car went up the street screaming bloody murder. From farther off other sirens took up the sound, like hounds on a scent. . . .

Miss Withers, who had started to leap toward the stairs like a firehorse at the first alarm, now held herself in check. "Let them shriek," she said. "I'm not going to mess into it."

"But—" Marcia Lee said. "It's—it's—"

Evidently the girl was more impressed and thrilled with the activities of the force than was Miss Withers. "I used to feel that way, too," she confessed. "But I've decided that the police are a lot of nincompoops."

"Not all of them!" Marcia Lee said definitely. She edged

toward the stair, started running down so fast that she tripped and slid the last few steps, spilling her handbag and vanity on the floor. The schoolteacher helped her up.

"And the sergeant may not even be on this case!" pointed out Miss Withers. But Marcia Lee was gone. Miss Withers waited, using all her self-control to keep from rushing after the sirens. Finally the rental agent, a baldish, gum-chewing young man, put in an appearance.

"My name is Leach, Al Leach," he said. "Sorry I'm late, but on my way back from lunch I stopped to see the excitement up on Fifty-seventh." Miss Withers waited. "Oh, it wasn't much," he continued. "Some fellow just smashed a window at Vanderbock's and grabbed an emerald ring."

"Imagine!" said Miss Withers. "Did they catch him?"

Leach shook his head. "He ducked around the corner, so a man told me. But everybody says that the police have drawn a sort of dragnet around the whole section. When you leave you'll have to be searched."

"Will I?" gasped the schoolteacher.

"Now about the apartments," he continued. "The painters and decorators will be finished in a day or so. I phoned the agencies to send every man they could dig up. The rent's eighty-five on a year's lease—and if you want any special shade on the paint now's the time to say so." Miss Withers hesitated, and he cocked his head. "I could let you have the top floor a bit cheaper—say seventy-five? It's had a first coat in a slightly darker tone, and the floor's been polished . . ."

Miss Withers hadn't thought about going that high. But it was worth looking into. "You go right ahead," he said. "I got to stay here a minute and give those painters hell for taking so long for lunch." He headed for the front door where outside a truck was backing up.

Up the stairs, all three flights of them, went Miss Hildergarde Withers. She opened the door of the top floor apartment, and entered. Instantly the pleasant smile with which she had been intending to greet her future home was erased

by a quick gasp. She walked slowly forward into the big living room, stepping gingerly like a cat on a damp floor.

It was the walls. On the creamy white of the smooth surface someone had painted a great blue eye, which wept red tears on the baseboard. Beside it was a pink tree with a mermaid's tail instead of roots, and across one branch, limply twisted like a piece of warm butterscotch, was a curious object which was—which must be!—a pocket watch with hands pointing to five o'clock.

Miss Withers drew back and sniffed. This was not even good surrealist art. Then she realized that she was not alone. There was a man standing beside her, breathing rather warmly on the back of her neck. He wore streaked white coveralls and carried a pail of paint. His face, too, was well smeared.

"Now tell me honestly what you think!" he begged, waving at the wall. "Have I got something there, or not?"

"Why—" Miss Withers backed away a little, not sure whether a laugh or a scream was indicated. The man wasn't drunk, because the rank smell about him was linseed oil, not alcohol.

"You mustn't go," he said thickly. There was pleading in his voice. "I have to explain about the white, white walls. Nobody can go on forever painting white, white, white. . . ." He stopped suddenly. "I'd like to paint you. I'd like to do you all pale blue, with your hair a rich yellowish-green." His smile faded, and the dreamy, puffy eyes widened. "It won't hurt!"

There was no getting past him to the door. Miss Withers had her umbrella, and now she raised it like a lance. "Stand back!"

"Don't scream, lady!" But she did scream, a goodly yip. Her voice echoed hollowly in the empty room. "Don't do that, lady!" he shouted, raising the pail of paint as if to hurl it.

"Mister Leach!" shrieked Miss Withers. There was the

pounding of footsteps on the stair. The painter, ignoring the paralyzed schoolma'am, turned toward the door, waiting. An expression of innocent enjoyment marked his face. He lifted the pail.

"Look out!" Miss Withers cried. "Don't!" But poor Leach came rushing into the room. His eyes took in the scene, his brain reacted, but his legs of their own volition took him three steps closer before they stopped. And by that time the pail of paint was over him. He lurched back, reeling and pawing at his eyes. Then he turned, stumbled, and half fell down the stair.

The painter turned back toward Miss Withers, but that lady had seized her opportunity and was now disappearing into the bathroom. The lock clicked behind her.

"Come on out, lady!" howled the painter. "The paint won't hurt you. If you don't like it you can wash it off!" He pounded on the door, kept on pounding until Leach came back up the stairs with two other painters and the nearest patrolman. Miss Withers even then did not unlock the door, not until the painter had been overpowered and pinned to the paint-covered floor. An ambulance arrived, and the doctor took one look and whipped out a hypodermic needle.

"Two minims of hyoscine m.c.," he observed cheerily. "And sleepy-by is what he needs."

"Do they ever get over it?" Miss Withers wanted to know.

"Lead poisoning? Why, sure. Give him a nice stomach wash of magnesium sulphate and he'll be good as new in a week, maybe sooner. Lots of painters get it—the lead in paint, you know. Delusions and so forth. It often takes the form of mild mania."

"Mild!" said Miss Withers bitterly. She gathered herself together as best she could, waded through the pools of spilled paint, and then stopped short in the doorway as Inspector Oscar Piper thundered up the stairs, followed by the young sergeant and a policeman. Piper was curious.

"What's that ambulance doing outside, and what's going on here, and—"

"How nice of you to drop over," said the schoolteacher sweetly. "You're only about ten minutes late."

The Inspector listened to what had happened, and shook his head. "You know, Hildegarde, wherever you are, there's trouble. You breed it, like stagnant water breeds mosquitoes."

"Hmmp!" Miss Withers started down the stair, stood aside to let the stretcher go past her. The Inspector followed her, almost amused now.

"It must have been funny, though," he observed. "Your walking in on that screwball painter. It could happen to nobody but you, nobody in the world."

They came into the lower hall. "At least," she said tartly, "you can't blame me for what happened up on Fifty-seventh Street today. So lightning struck twice in the same place, eh? And is your dragnet working?"

He shrugged. "We can't tell yet. I think we'll get the guy—in spite of your tipping off the whole thing to the papers."

"I hope you do," she said sweetly. Then her head jerked back, like a startled horse. "What?"

Doggedly, he repeated it. And she stood there, rigid with indignation, while the Inspector turned to confer with his aides and with the doctor. There was some question, it seemed, about the identity of the ambulance patient. "Book him at the hospital as John Doe for the time being," he ordered. "Mains, you can check with the employment office and the painters' union and find out who he is." He turned back to Miss Withers. "Hey, where are you going?"

"Home!" said that lady, very definitely.

"Well, you better let me send Sergeant Mains to pass you through the cordon, or—"

"I want no favors from you!" she snapped. "The idea of your thinking *I* blabbed to the papers!"

"Well?" shrugged Piper. "Nobody knew about the dragnet, outside of the department, except you and the Commissioner."

"I knew—and the *Commissioner!*" she exploded. "Of course, *I* must be the one. *I* have so many reporters in *my*

outer office, and *I'm* in politics and need the good-will of the papers, and . . ." The Inspector was trying to talk, but she was not in the mood to listen. "And all right for you, Oscar Piper. You stood me up for dinner the other night. Well, now you can stew in your own juice. Go back to your precious dragnet, and see what it brings you. And when it fails, don't come to *me!*"

"That, my boy," said the Inspector slowly, "is what they call giving somebody a piece of one's mind." Sergeant Mains stood beside him, looking dubiously after the departing schoolma'am. "The sad part about it is that she's right," Piper finished.

Consciousness of rectitude gave Miss Hildegarde Withers no inner feeling of satisfaction whatever on her homeward march, which was interrupted for nearly twenty minutes while she stood in line to have her handbag searched. The cordon was tight, no doubt about that.

She flounced back into her own apartment in the west Seventies, the apartment which she had decided to vacate in a month. In spite of herself she spent the rest of the afternoon listening in on the police wave-length. At six o'clock she turned back to the regular news broadcast and heard an announcer declaim that today New York had seen its most spectacular man hunt since the capture of Two-gun Crowley—a man hunt which was by this time admittedly a failure.

"I told him so," Miss Withers snapped at her mirror, without pleasure. By the time she had picked at her dinner and done up the dishes, she was definitely uneasy. Somewhere, deep down in the bottom of her mind, the schoolteacher sensed that a signal light was burning, as it had burned so many times before, to tell her that she had missed something. It was an angry red signal. . . .

At nine o'clock the boys cried an extra through the streets, with headlines "COP-KILLER RETURNS—GETS REST OF LOOT." There were remarks about butter-fingered police, and the need for a shakeup at Centre Street.



Much to her surprise, Miss Withers was not surprised at all when her doorbell rang some time later, and she found the Inspector outside. He was a very tired and gray and deflated Inspector.

"Oh," she said. "Come in."

He hesitated. "I thought of sending you flowers, only all the florists are closed. And I was going to have a Western Union messenger come up and sing you something, only they don't know the songs with the right words." He smiled wanly. "You see, it *was* the Commissioner that gave out that story to the press."

"Come on in!" she insisted. "For heaven's sake, come on in." She stared at him. "Oscar Piper, have you eaten anything today?"

He shrugged. "I don't remember." But he came inside, sank into a chair. "I'm not hungry," he insisted. "Would you be hungry if they were going to take away your badge tomorrow morning? I'll be back at a precinct desk, see if I'm not."

"No luck at all with the dragnet?"

"None. We picked up three or four crooks we'd been looking for, but none of them is up to this sort of crime. And no trace anywhere of that emerald—that hunk of green ice!"

She fed him scrambled eggs, made him clean up the plate. She even insisted on his smoking one of his long greenish-brown cigars, a privilege hitherto denied him in her domain. Oscar Piper stared unhappily at the smoke as it rose.

"It's the same crook," he observed. "With the same twisted sense of humor. He made a laughing-stock out of me and the entire force."

"An egomaniac," agreed the schoolteacher. Now the red bulb in the back of her mind was flashing and glowing like a neon sign. "A maniac—" She gulped. "Oscar! Suppose that your dragnet didn't fail! Suppose that it didn't catch your crook because he rode through in an ambulance!"

Piper tensed, then relaxed again. "I checked all that, Hildegarde," he told her. "The painter, you mean. No, he was a real painter, registered and everything. And I called Bellevue and he was really brought in there to the emergency ward, booked for lead poisoning."

"When?"

The Inspector thought it was about an hour ago.

She rose suddenly and headed for the bedroom, where her telephone was installed. Oscar Piper puffed unhappily, and she was back before the long gray ash had fallen from his cigar. "Oscar!" she announced, "Bellevue released that man twenty minutes ago, to a nurse from the Painters' Union Clinic!"

"Well? What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing at all. Except that I called Information, and there is no Painters' Union Clinic."

The Inspector rocked back on his heels as if he had run into a haymaker. "That does it! Now I know I ought to quit the force and get a job as understudy to an idiot!" He started pacing the floor. "We had him! We had him, and just because he put on an act with a bucket of paint we sent him off in an ambulance with our blessing! Good gravy!"

"What about the emerald?" Miss Withers suggested.

"He swallowed it, probably. Anyway, it's gone and so is he . . ."

She shook her head. "A man as smart as that wouldn't risk swallowing the jewel, not when he faced the prospect of stomach pumps at the hospital. No, Oscar."

"Well, then?"

The red light flared again in the back of her mind, flared into an electric sign as clear as the messages which went twinkling around the Times Building.

"Oscar! The deadline or dragnet or whatever it is—it's all over?"

He nodded. "We had to order the men back to their regular duty, after they'd all met in the middle of the area and

reported a blank." Miss Withers was grabbing her hat. "Hey—"

"Come on!" she cried. "Get a taxi."

The taxicab was not necessary, as it developed that young Sergeant Mains and a Headquarters car waited below. They piled in and Miss Withers gave an address. "And please, no siren!" she begged. "I know you all love the things, the way small boys love a whistle, but just this once. . . ."

They cut south along Central Park West, red lights blazing, and then left at the Circle. . . . And then they were outside the remodelled brownstone, with its "Unfurnished Apartments" sign. "Wait here," ordered Piper, looking at the sergeant. Miss Withers was already rushing up the steps, and he hurried after her. The front door was half open, and in the lower hall with its muddle of equipment one pale light bulb gleamed. Most particularly did it gleam down upon Miss Marcia Lee Smith, who seemed a bit startled.

"Still looking for the rental agent?" quizzed the schoolma'am.

Marcia Lee gasped, blinked, and answered. "Oh, it's you! I—why—I—" She was peering toward the door. "You 'member when we were here this afternoon? And I spilled my bag? Well, I lost eighty-five dollars somehow. I must have, because it's gone. You didn't see it, did you?"

Miss Withers said that it had been years since she had seen that much money all at one time. The Inspector pushed into the scene. "What makes, anyway?"

"You remember Miss Smith," said the schoolteacher. "She and I were looking for apartments the other day, and we met again today. Our paths are always crossing."

"You haven't seen anybody hanging around upstairs?" Piper demanded of the girl.

"I haven't been upstairs," the girl admitted. "It was so dark and lonesome—I had just about decided I'd run along home and come back and look for my money in the morning."

"A very good idea," agreed Miss Withers. "It's a bit late for you to be out. But, by the way—" she lowered her voice—"there's a friend of yours outside in the car."

The Inspector was already on his way up the stair, and Miss Withers hurried along after him. They approached the top floor apartment on tiptoe, entered softly in the wake of the round beam cast by Piper's flashlight. The big living room was empty, except for the half-dried puddles of paint not yet cleared away. The kitchen, the bath, the bedroom, the closets—all empty.

"Maybe we're too late," Piper said. "Maybe he's been and gone, with the emerald." But Miss Withers thought not. They began to search. An empty apartment offers few hiding places. Piper looked under the drain in each bit of plumbing. He looked up the flue of the fireplace, and behind the venetian blinds. He even raised each window, making sure that the emerald had not been hung outside on a thread.

Finally they both admitted failure. "I wonder," Miss Withers began, "if we might not get some information from that girl. Of course she's outside talking to your handsome sergeant."

Of course she was—they could look down from the window. But even as Piper started to lead the way out of the place, Miss Withers froze. "My ankles!" she whispered. "They feel a draft."

Oscar Piper halted, looking dubious. "Oscar, the back door! Somebody just opened it . . ." she insisted.

He nodded. Then, motioning her to stay behind him, Oscar Piper went softly back into the apartment. He crossed the living room, came into the kitchen. The rear door was closed and locked, but that didn't prove anything. He started to turn. . . .

"Up!" came a voice behind him. "Up high—higher than that!" The bathroom door opened, and a man came out, a smallish man, no more than five feet six. He was in his middle thirties, and his mouth was twisted in a curious smile. He held an automatic pistol in his right hand.

"Back up!" was the order. "Now go on—both of you!" It was the mad painter, only he wasn't really mad. It was the jewel thief, the murderer of Sam Bodley, the man in the tan raincoat who had jumped so lightly to the waiting car. . . .

"Don't make any moves, copper!" he said.

"What do you think this will get you?" asked Inspector Piper slowly, as he backed into the living room. "Why don't you drop that gun and give yourself up? I know you. You're Joe Swinton . . . Swinnerton? . . . Swinston, that's it!"

There was a difficult pause. "That's too bad," said the man with the gun. "Sorry you recognized me, copper. Because now I've got to knock you over, and I wasn't going to do that . . ."

Oscar Piper may have been worried, but he did not show it. "You haven't nerve enough to shoot."

"I've got more nerve than you," Swinston told him, and looked it. Miss Withers, who had been edging imperceptibly toward the front window, realized that of all the tough spots they had ever been in, this was about the toughest.

The Inspector's body was as tense as a coiled spring, but he kept his voice easy. "Come on, Joe, where did you stash the emerald?"

Swinston didn't take the bait. "What good would it do you to know, copper? *You* aren't going looking for that hunk of green ice. . . ." His mouth was smiling, but his eyes squinted narrowly, and he tightened in preparation for the recoil of the gun. It's now or never, said Hildegard Withers to herself, and grasped the cord of the venetian blind. It fell with a most terrific clatter. Swinston, caught off guard, turned and fired blindly. At almost the same instant he was kicked most deftly in the stomach by Oscar Piper, who had his own ideas about the amount of courtesy which should be extended to cop-killers.

"Not exactly sporting, Oscar, but well-timed," observed the schoolteacher, as the Inspector slipped bracelets on the writhing bandit.

He looked up at her. "You all right?"

"It's about time you wondered," she told him, eyeing the neat round hole in the wall beside her left ear. But what interested her most was the sequence of events down on the sidewalk. The Inspector came up beside her at the window, and they both stared down, wide-eyed.

Far below them, beside the Headquarters car, Sergeant Mains was embracing Marcia Lee Smith. And a curious embrace it was, for he had her arm pinned behind her back and was, at the moment, twisting it.

"When the shot went off she tried to swing a sap on me!" complained the bewildered young sergeant later, as they waited at the curb for the Black Maria, prisoners handcuffed together.

Piper grinned. "You've been monkeying with a buzz saw, Romeo. This dame is the one who drove the getaway car, in blonde wig and glasses. Then she hopped out and came back to give us a wrong steer on the description of her boy friend. Didn't you, honey chile?"

Marcia Lee swore at him in a south Brooklyn accent. "Don't talk," Joe Swinston told her.

"You'll talk," the Inspector said, "when we find that emerald." He suddenly jumped as something cold and wet was dropped into his hand by Miss Hildegard Withers, who had lingered in the apartment for a moment while he was shoving his captive down the stair. "What the blazes—"

"Of course," Miss Withers said. "Mr. Swinston here has just the type of mind that would see humor in hiding the emerald—the green ice—where he did. I should have figured it out sooner." She pointed to what Piper held gingerly in his hand.

They all looked down and saw, by the pale light of the street lamp, a melting ice cube in which glittered a big square drop of green fire.

# *The Curate of Churnside*

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G R A N T A L L E N

WALTER DENE, deacon, in his faultless Oxford clerical coat and broad felt hat, strolled along slowly, sunning himself as he went, after his wont, down the pretty central lane of West Churnside. It was just the idyllic village best suited to the taste of such an idyllic young curate as Walter Dene. There were cottages with low-thatched roofs, thickly overgrown with yellow stonecrop and pink houseleek; there were trellis-work porches up which the scented dog-rose and the fainter honeysuckle clambered together in sisterly rivalry; there were targeted gable-ends of Elizabethan farm-houses, quaintly varied with black oak joists and moulded plaster panels. At the end of all, between an avenue of ancient elm trees, the heavy square tower of the old church closed in the little vista—a church with a round Norman doorway and dog-tooth arches, melting into Early English lancets in the aisle, and finishing up with a great Decorated east window by the broken cross and yew tree. Not a trace of Perpendicularity about it anywhere, thank goodness: “for if it were Perpendicular,” said Walter Dene to himself often, “I really think, in spite of my uncle, I should have to look out for another curacy.”

Yes, it was a charming village, and a charming country; but, above all, it was rendered habitable and pleasurable for a man of taste by the informing presence of Christina Eliot. “I don’t think I shall propose to Christina this week after all,”

thought Walter Dene as he strolled along lazily. "The most delightful part of love-making is certainly its first beginning. The little tremor of hope and expectation; the half-needless doubt you feel as to whether she really loves you; the pains you take to pierce the thin veil of maidenly reserve; the triumph of detecting her at a blush or a flutter when she sees you coming—all these are delicate little morsels to be rolled daintily on the critical palate, and not to be swallowed down coarsely at one vulgar gulp. Poor child, she is on tenter-hooks of hesitation and expectancy all the time, I know; for I'm sure she loves me now, I'm sure she loves me; but I must wait a week yet: she will be grateful to me for it hereafter. We mustn't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs; we mustn't eat up all our capital at one extravagant feast, and then lament the want of our interest ever afterward. Let us live another week in our first fool's paradise before we enter on the safer but less tremulous pleasures of sure possession. We can enjoy first love but once in a lifetime; let us enjoy it now while we can, and not fling away the chance prematurely by mere childish haste and girlish precipitancy." Thinking which thing, Walter Dene halted a moment by the churchyard wall, picked a long spray of scented wild thyme from a mossy cranny, and gazed into the blue sky above at the graceful swifts who nested in the old tower, as they curved and circled through the yielding air on their evenly poised and powerful pinions.

Just at that moment old Mary Long came out of her cottage to speak with the young parson. "If ye plaze, Maister Dene," she said in her native west-country dialect, "our Nully would like to zee 'ee. She's main ill to-day, zur, and she be like to die a'most, I'm thinking."

"Poor child, poor child," said Walter Dene tenderly. "She's a dear little thing, Mrs. Long, is your Nellie, and I hope she may yet be spared to you. I'll come and see her at once, and try if I can do anything to ease her."

He crossed the road compassionately with the tottering

old grandmother, giving her his helping hand over the kerbstone, and following her with bated breath into the close little sick-room. Then he flung open the tiny casement with its diamond-leadèd panes, so as to let in the fresh summer air, and picked a few sprigs of sweet-briar from the porch, which he joined with the geranium from his own button-hole to make a tiny nosegay for the bare bedside. After that, he sat and talked awhile gently in an undertone to pale, pretty little Nellie herself, and went away at last promising to send her some jelly and some soup immediately from the vicarage kitchen.

"She's a sweet little child," he said to himself musingly, "though I'm afraid she's not long for this world now; and the poor like these small attentions dearly. They get them seldom, and value them for the sake of the thoughtfulness they imply, rather than for the sake of the mere things themselves. I can order a bottle of calf's-foot at the grocer's, and Carter can set it in a mould without any trouble; while as for the soup, some tinned mock-turtle and a little fresh stock makes a really capital mixture for this sort of thing. It costs so little to give these poor souls pleasure, and it is a great luxury to oneself undeniably. But, after all, what a funny trade it is to set an educated man to do! They send us up to Oxford or Cambridge, give us a distinct taste for Æschylus and Catullus, Dante and Milton, Mendelssohn and Chopin, good claret and *olives farcies*, and then bring us down to a country village, to look after the bodily and spiritual ailments of rheumatic old washerwomen! If it were not for poetry, flowers, and Christina, I really think I should succumb entirely under the infliction."

"He's a dear, good man, that he is, is young passon," murmured old Mary Long as Walter disappeared between the elm trees; "and he do love the poor and the zick, the same as if he was their own brother. God bless his zoul, the dear, good vulla, vor all his kindness to our Nully."

Halfway down the main lane Walter came across Christina

Eliot. As she saw him she smiled and coloured a little, and held out her small gloved hand prettily. Walter took it with a certain courtly and graceful chivalry. "An exquisite day, Miss Eliot," he said; "such a depth of sapphire in the sky, such a faint undertone of green on the clouds by the horizon, such a lovely humming of bees over the flickering hot meadows! On days like this, one feels that Schopenhauer is wrong after all, and that life is sometimes really worth living."

"It seems to me often worth living," Christina answered; "if not for oneself, at least for others. But you pretend to be more of a pessimist than you really are, I fancy, Mr. Dene. Any one who finds so much beauty in the world as you do can hardly think life poor or meagre. You seem to catch the loveliest points in everything you look at, and to throw a little literary or artistic reflection over them which makes them even lovelier than they are in themselves."

"Well, no doubt one can increase one's possibilities of enjoyment by carefully cultivating one's own faculties of admiration and appreciation," said the curate thoughtfully; "but, after all, life has only a few chapters that are thoroughly interesting and enthralling in all its history. We oughtn't to hurry over them too lightly, Miss Eliot; we ought to linger on them lovingly, and make the most of their potentialities; we ought to dwell upon them like 'linked sweetness long drawn out.' It is the mistake of the world at large to hurry too rapidly over the pleasantest episodes, just as children pick all the plums at once out of the pudding. I often think that, from the purely selfish and temporal point of view, the real value of a life to its subject may be measured by the space of time over which he has managed to spread the enjoyment of its greatest pleasures. Look, for example, at poetry, now."

A faint shade of disappointment passed across Christina's face as he turned from what seemed another groove into that indifferent subject; but she answered at once, "Yes, of course one feels that with the higher pleasures at least; but there

are others in which the interest of plot is greater, and then one looks naturally rather to the end. When you begin a good novel, you can't help hurrying through it in order to find out what becomes of everybody at last."

"Ah, but the highest artistic interest goes beyond mere plot interest. I like rather to read for the pleasure of reading, and to loiter over the passages that please me, quite irrespective of what goes before or what comes after; just as you, for your part, like to sketch a beautiful scene for its own worth to you, irrespective of what may happen to the leaves in autumn, or to the cottage roof in twenty years from this. By the way, have you finished that little water-colour of the mill yet? It's the prettiest thing of yours I've ever seen, and I want to look how you've managed the light on your foreground."

"Come in and see it," said Christina. "It's finished now, and, to tell you the truth, I'm very well pleased with it myself."

"Then I know it must be good," the curate answered; "for you are always your own harshest critic." And he turned in at the little gate with her, and entered the village doctor's tiny drawing-room.

Christina placed the sketch on an easel near the window—a low window opening to the ground, with long lithe festoons of faint-scented jasmine encroaching on it from outside—and let the light fall on it aslant in the right direction. It was a pretty and a clever sketch certainly, with more than a mere amateur's sense of form and colour; and Walter Dene, who had a true eye for pictures, could conscientiously praise it for its artistic depth and fulness. Indeed, on that head at least, Walter Dene's veracity was unimpeachable, however lax in other matters; nothing on earth would have induced him to praise as good a picture or a sculpture in which he saw no real merit. He sat a little while criticizing and discussing it, suggesting an improvement here or an alteration there, and then he rose hurriedly, remembering all at once his forgotten promise to little Nellie. "Dear me," he said,

"your daughter's picture has almost made me overlook my proper duties, Mrs. Eliot. I promised to send some jelly and things at once to poor little Nellie Long at her grandmother's. How very wrong of me to let my natural inclinations keep me loitering here, when I ought to have been thinking of the poor of my parish!" And he went out with just a gentle pressure on Christina's hand, and a look from his eyes that her heart knew how to read aright at the first glance of it.

"Do you know, Christie," said her father, "I sometimes fancy when I hear that new parson fellow talk about his artistic feelings, and so on, that he's just a trifle selfish, or at least self-centred. He always dwells so much on his own enjoyment of things, you know."

"Oh no, papa," cried Christina warmly. "He's anything but selfish, I'm sure. Look how kind he is to all the poor in the village, and how much he thinks about their comfort and welfare. And whenever he's talking with one, he seems so anxious to make you feel happy and contented with yourself. He has a sort of little subtle flattery of manner about him that's all pure kindness; and he's always thinking what he can say or do to please you, and to help you onward. What you say about his dwelling on enjoyment so much is really only his artistic sensibility. He feels things so keenly, and enjoys beauty so deeply, that he can't help talking enthusiastically about it even a little out of season. He has more feelings to display than most men, and I'm sure that's the reason why he displays them so much. A ploughboy could only talk enthusiastically about roast beef and dumplings; Mr. Dene can talk about everything that's beautiful and sublime on earth or in heaven."

Meanwhile, Walter Dene was walking quickly with his measured tread—the even, regular tread of a cultivated gentleman—down the lane toward the village grocer's, saying to himself as he went, "There was never such a girl in all the world as my Christina. She may be only a country surgeon's daughter—a rosebud on a hedgerow bush—but she has the

soul and the eye of a queen among women for all that. Every lover has deceived himself with the same sweet dream, to be sure—how over-analytic we have become nowadays, when I must needs half argue myself out of the sweets of first love!—but then they hadn't so much to go upon as I have. She has a wonderful touch in music, she has an exquisite eye in painting, she has an Italian charm in manner and conversation. I'm something of a connoisseur, after all, and no more likely to be deceived in a woman than I am in a wine or a picture. And next week I shall really propose formally to Christina, though I know by this time it will be nothing more than the merest formality. Her eyes are too eloquent not to have told me that long ago. It will be a delightful pleasure to live for her, and in order to make her happy. I frankly recognize that I am naturally a little selfish—not coarsely and vulgarly selfish; from that disgusting and piggish vice I may conscientiously congratulate myself that I'm fairly free; but still selfish in a refined and cultivated manner. Now, living with Christina and for Christina will correct this defect in my nature, will tend to bring me nearer to a true standard of perfection. When I am by her side, and then only, I feel that I am thinking entirely of her, and not at all of myself. To her I show my best side; with her, that best side would be always uppermost. The companionship of such a woman makes life something purer, and higher, and better worth having. The one thing that stands in our way is this horrid practical question of what to live upon. I don't suppose Uncle Arthur will be inclined to allow me anything, and I can't marry on my own paltry income and my curacy only. Yet I can't bear to keep Christina waiting indefinitely till some thick-headed squire or other chooses to take it into his opaque brain to give me a decent living."

From the grocer's the curate walked on, carrying the two tins in his hand, as far as the vicarage. He went into the library, sat down by his own desk, and rang the bell. "Will you be kind enough to give those things to Carter, John?" he said

in his bland voice; "and tell her to put the jelly in a mould, and let it set. The soup must be warmed with a little fresh stock, and seasoned. Then take them both, with my compliments, to old Mary Long the washerwoman, for her grandchild. Is my uncle in?"

"No, Master Walter," answered the man—he was always "Master Walter" to the old servants at his uncle's—"the vicar have gone over by train to Churminster. He told me to tell you he wouldn't be back till evening, after dinner."

"Did you see him off, John?"

"Yes, Master Walter. I took his portmantew to the station."

"This will be a good chance, then," thought Walter Dene to himself. "Very well, John," he went on aloud: "I shall write my sermon now. Don't let anybody come to disturb me."

John nodded and withdrew. Walter Dene locked the door after him carefully, as he often did when writing sermons, and then lit a cigar, which was also a not infrequent concomitant of his exegetical labours. After that he walked once or twice up and down the room, paused a moment to look at his parchment-covered Rabelais and Villon on the bookshelf, peered out of the dulled glass windows with the crest in their centre, and finally drew a curious bent iron instrument out of his waistcoat pocket. With it in his hands, he went up quietly to his uncle's desk, and began fumbling at the lock in an experienced manner. As a matter of fact, it was not his first trial of skill in lock-picking; for Walter Dene was a painstaking and methodical man, and having made up his mind that he would get at and read his uncle's will, he took good care to begin by fastening all the drawers in his own bedroom, and trying his prentice hand at unfastening them again in the solitude of his chamber.

After half a minute's twisting and turning, the wards gave way gently to his dexterous pressure, and the lid of the desk lay open before him. Walter Dene took out the different papers one by one—there was no need for hurry, and he was not a nervous person—till he came to a roll of parchment,

which he recognized at once as the expected will. He unrolled it carefully and quietly, without any womanish trembling or excitement—"thank Heaven," he said to himself, "I'm above such nonsense as that"—and sat down leisurely to read it in the big, low, velvet-covered study chair. As he did so, he did not forget to lay a notched foot-rest for his feet, and to put the little Japanese dish on the tiny table by his side to hold his cigar ash. "And now," he said, "for the important question whether Uncle Arthur has left his money to me, or to Arthur, or to both of us equally. He ought, of course, to leave at least half to me, seeing I have become a curate on purpose to please him, instead of following my natural vocation to the Bar; but I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he had left it all to Arthur. He's a pig-headed and illogical old man, the vicar; and he can never forgive me, I believe, because, being the eldest son, I wasn't called after him by my father and mother. As if that was my fault! Some people's ideas of personal responsibility are so ridiculously muddled."

He composed himself quietly in the armchair, and glanced rapidly at the will through the meaningless preliminaries till he came to the significant clauses. These he read more carefully. "All my estate in the county of Dorset, and the messuage or tenement known as Redlands, in the parish of Lode, in the county of Devon, to my dear nephew, Arthur Dene," he said to himself slowly: "Oh, this will never do." "And I give and bequeath to my said nephew, Arthur Dene, the sum of ten thousand pounds, three per cent. consolidated annuities, now standing in my name"—"Oh this is atrocious, quite atrocious! What's this?" "And I give and bequeath to my dear nephew, Walter Dene, the residue of my personal estate"—"and so forth. Oh no. That's quite sufficient. This must be rectified. The residuary legatee would only come in for a few hundreds or so. It's quite preposterous. The vicar was always an ill-tempered, cantankerous, unaccountable person, but I wonder he has the face to sit opposite me at dinner after that."

He hummed an air from Schubert, and sat a moment looking thoughtfully at the will. Then he said to himself quietly, "The simplest thing to do would be merely to scrape out or take out with chemicals the name Arthur, substituting the name Walter, and *vice versâ*. That's a very small matter; a man who draws as well as I do ought to be able easily to imitate a copying clerk's engrossing hand. But it would be madness to attempt it now and here; I want a little practice first. At the same time, I mustn't keep the will out a moment longer than is necessary; my uncle may return by some accident before I expect him; and the true philosophy of life consists in invariably minimizing the adverse chances. This will was evidently drawn up by Watson and Blenkiron, of Chancery Lane. I'll write to-morrow and get them to draw up a will for me, leaving all I possess to Arthur. The same clerk is pretty sure to engross it, and that'll give me a model for the two names on which I can do a little preliminary practice. Besides, I can try the stuff Wharton told me about, for making ink fade on the same parchment. That will be killing two birds with one stone, certainly. And now if I don't make haste I shan't have time to write my sermon."

He replaced the will calmly in the desk, fastened the lock again with a delicate twirl of the pick, and sat down in his armchair to compose his discourse for to-morrow's evensong. "It's not a bad bit of rhetoric," he said to himself as he read it over for correction, "but I'm not sure that I haven't plagiarized a little too freely from Montaigne and dear old Burton. What a pity it must be thrown away upon a Churnside congregation! Not a soul in the whole place will appreciate a word of it, except Christina. Well, well, that alone is enough reward for any man." And he knocked off his ash pensively into the Japanese ash-pan.

During the course of the next week Walter practised diligently the art of imitating handwriting. He got his will drawn up and engrossed at Watson and Blenkiron's (without signing it, *bien entendu*); and he spent many solitary

hours in writing the two names "Walter" and "Arthur" on the spare end of parchment, after the manner of the engrossing clerk. He also tested the stuff for making the ink fade to his own perfect satisfaction. And on the next occasion when his uncle was safely off the premises for three hours, he took the will once more deliberately from the desk, removed the obnoxious letters with scrupulous care, and wrote in his own name in place of Arthur's, so that even the engrossing clerk himself would hardly have known the difference. "There," he said to himself approvingly, as he took down quiet old George Herbert from the shelf and sat down to enjoy an hour's smoke after the business was over, "that's one good deed well done, anyhow. I have the calm satisfaction of a clear conscience. The vicar's proposed arrangement was really most unfair; I have substituted for it what Aristotle would have rightly called true distributive justice. For though I've left all the property to myself, by the unfortunate necessity of the case, of course I won't take it all. I'll be juster than the vicar. Arthur shall have his fair share, which is more, I believe, than he'd have done for me; but I hate squalid money-grubbing. If brothers can't be generous and brotherly to one another, what a wretched, sordid little life this of ours would really be!"

Next Sunday morning the vicar preached, and Walter sat looking up at him reflectively from his place in the chancel. A beautiful clear-cut face, the curate's, and seen to great advantage from the doctor's pew, set off by the white surplice, and upturned in quiet meditation towards the elder priest in the pulpit. Walter was revolving many things in his mind, and most of all one adverse chance which he could not just then see his way to minimize. Any day his uncle might take it into his head to read over the will and discover the—ah, well, the rectification. Walter was a man of too much delicacy of feeling even to think of it to himself as a fraud or a forgery. Then, again, the vicar was not a very old man after all; he might live for an indefinite period, and Christina and

himself might lose all the best years of their life waiting for a useless person's natural removal. What a pity that three-score was not the utmost limit of human life! For his own part, like the Psalmist, Walter had no desire to outlive his own highest tastes and powers of enjoyment. Ah, well, well, man's prerogative is to better and improve upon nature. If people do not die when they ought, then it becomes clearly necessary for philosophically minded juniors to help them on their way artificially.

It was an ugly necessity, certainly; Walter frankly recognized that fact from the very beginning, and he shrank even from contemplating it; but there was no other way out of the difficulty. The old man had always been a selfish bachelor, with no love for anybody or anything on earth except his books, his coins, his garden, and his dinner; he was growing tired of all except the last; would it not be better for the world at large, on strict utilitarian principles, that he should go at once? True, such steps are usually to be deprecated; but the wise man is a law unto himself, and instead of laying down the wooden, hard-and-fast lines that make conventional morality so much a rule of thumb, he judges every individual case on its own particular merits. Here was Christina's happiness and his own on the one hand, with many collateral advantages to other people, set in the scale against the feeble remnant of a selfish old man's days on the other. Walter Dene had a constitutional horror of taking life in any form, and especially of shedding blood; but he flattered himself that if anything of the sort became clearly necessary, he was not the man to shrink from taking the needful measures to ensure it, at any sacrifice of personal comfort.

All through the next week Walter turned over the subject in his own mind; and the more he thought about it, the more the plan gained in definiteness and consistency as detail after detail suggested itself to him. First he thought of poison. That was the cleanest and neatest way of managing the thing, he considered; and it involved the least unpleasant

consequences. To stick a knife or shoot a bullet into any sentient creature was a horrid and revolting act; to put a little tasteless powder into a cup of coffee and let a man sleep off his life quietly was really nothing more than helping him involuntarily to a delightful euthanasia. "I wish any one would do as much for me at his age, without telling me about it," Walter said to himself seriously. But then the chances of detection would be much increased by using poison, and Walter felt it an imperative duty to do nothing which would expose Christina to the shock of a discovery. She would not see the matter in the same practical light as he did; women never do; their morality is purely conventional, and a wise man will do nothing on earth to shake it. You cannot buy poison without the risk of exciting question. There remained, then, only shooting or stabbing. But shooting makes an awkward noise, and attracts attention at the moment; so the one thing possible was a knife, unpleasant as that conclusion seemed to all his more delicate feelings.

Having thus decided, Walter Dene proceeded to lay his plans with deliberate caution. He had no intention whatsoever of being detected, though his method of action was simplicity itself. It was only bunglers and clumsy fools who got caught; he knew that a man of his intelligence and ability would not make such an idiot of himself as—well, as common ruffians always do. He took his old American bowie-knife, bought years ago as a curiosity, out of the drawer where it had lain so long. It was very rusty, but it would be safer to sharpen it privately on his own hone and strop than to go asking for a new knife at a shop for the express purpose of enabling the shopman afterwards to identify him. He sharpened it for safety's sake during sermon-hour in the library, with the door locked as usual. It took a long time to get off all the rust, and his arm got quickly tired. One morning as he was polishing away at it, he was stopped for a moment by a butterfly which flapped and fluttered against the dulled windowpanes. "Poor thing," he said to himself, "it

will beat its feathery wings to pieces in its struggles;" and he put a vase of Venetian glass on top of it, lifted the sash carefully, and let the creature fly away outside in the broad sunshine. At the same moment the vicar, who was strolling with his King Charlie on the lawn, came up and looked in at the window. He could not have seen in before, because of the dulled and painted diamonds.

"That's a murderous-looking weapon, Wally," he said, with a smile, as his glance fell upon the bowie and hone. "What do you use it for?"

"Oh, it's an American bowie," Walter answered carelessly. "I bought it long ago for a curiosity, and now I'm sharpening it up to help me in carving that block of walnut wood." And he ran his finger lightly along the edge of the blade to test its keenness. What a lucky thing that it was the vicar himself, and not the gardener! If he had been caught by anybody else the fact would have been fatal evidence after all was over. "*Méfiez-vous des papillons*," he hummed to himself, after Béranger, as he shut down the window. "One more butterfly, and I must give up the game as useless."

Meanwhile, as Walter meant to make a clean job of it—hacking and hewing clumsily was repulsive to all his finer feelings—he began also to study carefully the anatomy of the human back. He took down all the books on the subject in the library, and by their aid discovered exactly under which ribs the heart lay. A little observation of the vicar, compared with the plates in Quain's "Anatomy," showed him precisely at what point in his clerical coat the most vulnerable interstice was situated. "It's a horrid thing to have to do," he thought over and over again as he planned it, "but it's the only way to secure Christina's happiness." And so, by a certain bright Friday evening in August, Walter Dene had fully completed all his preparations.

That afternoon, as on all bright afternoons in summer, the vicar went for a walk in the grounds, attended only by little King Charlie. He was squire and parson at once in Churn-

side, and he loved to make the round of his own estate. At a certain gate by Selbury Copse the vicar always halted to rest awhile, leaning on the bar and looking at the view across the valley. It was a safe and lonely spot. Walter remained at home (he was to take the regular Friday evensong) and went into the study by himself. After a while he took his hat, not without trembling, strolled across the garden, and then made the short cut through the copse, so as to meet the vicar by the gate. On his way he heard the noise of the Dennings in the farm opposite, out rabbit-shooting with their guns and ferrets in the warren. His very soul shrank within him at the sound of that brutal sport. "Great heavens!" he said to himself, with a shudder; "to think how I loathe and shrink from the necessity of almost painlessly killing this one selfish old man for an obviously good reason, and those creatures there will go out massacring innocent animals with the aid of a hideous beast of prey, not only without remorse, but actually by way of amusement! I thank Heaven I am not even as they are." Near the gate he came upon his uncle quietly and naturally, though it would be absurd to deny that at that supreme moment even Walter Dene's equable heart throbbed hard, and his breath went and came tremulously. "Alone," he thought to himself, "and nobody near; this is quite providential," using even then, in thought, the familiar phraseology of his profession.

"A lovely afternoon, Uncle Arthur," he said as composedly as he could, accurately measuring the spot on the vicar's coat with his eye meanwhile. "The valley looks beautiful in this light."

"Yes, a lovely afternoon, Wally, my boy, and an exquisite glimpse down yonder into the churchyard."

As he spoke, Walter half leaned upon the gate beside him, and adjusted the knife behind the vicar's back scientifically. Then, without a word more, in spite of a natural shrinking, he drove it home up to the haft, with a terrible effort of will, at the exact spot on the back that the books had pointed out

to him. It was a painful thing to do, but he did it carefully and well. The effect of Walter Dene's scientific prevision was even more instantaneous than he had anticipated. Without a single cry, without a sob or a contortion, the vicar's lifeless body fell over heavily by the side of the gate. It rolled down like a log into the dry ditch beneath. Walter knelt trembling on the ground close by, felt the pulse for a moment to assure himself that his uncle was really dead, and having fully satisfied himself on this all-important point, proceeded to draw the knife neatly out of the wound. He had let it fall in the body, in order to extricate it more easily afterward, and not risk pulling it out carelessly so as to get himself covered needlessly by tell-tale drops of blood, like ordinary clumsy assassins. But he had forgotten to reckon with little King Charlie. The dog jumped piteously upon the body of his master, licked the wound with his tongue, and refused to allow Walter to withdraw the knife. It would be unsafe to leave it there, for it might be recognized. "Minimize the adverse chances," he muttered still; but there was no inducing King Charlie to move. A struggle might result in getting drops of blood upon his coat, and then, great heavens, what a terrible awakening for Christina! "Oh, Christina, Christina, Christina," he said to himself piteously, "it is for you only that I could ever have ventured to do this hideous thing." The blood was still oozing out of the narrow slit, and saturating the black coat, and Walter Dene with his delicate nerves could hardly bear to look upon it.

At last he summoned up resolution to draw out the knife from the ugly wound, in spite of King Charlie, and as he did so, oh, horror! the little dog jumped at it, and cut his left fore-leg against the sharp edge deep to the bone. Here was a pretty accident indeed! If Walter Dene had been a common heartless murderer he would have snatched up the knife immediately, left the poor lame dog to watch and bleed beside his dead master, and skulked off hurriedly from the mute witness to his accomplished crime. But Walter was

made of very different mould from that; he could not find it in his heart to leave a poor dumb animal wounded and bleeding for hours together, alone and untended. Just at first, indeed, he tried sophistically to persuade himself his duty to Christina demanded that he should go away at once, and never mind the sufferings of a mere spaniel; but his better nature told him the next moment that such sophisms were indefensible, and his humane instincts overcame even the profound instinct of self-preservation. He sat down quietly beside the warm corpse. "Thank goodness," he said, with a slight shiver of disgust, "I'm not one of those weak-minded people who are troubled by remorse. They would be so overcome by terror at what they had done that they would want to run away from the body immediately, at any price. But I don't think I *could* feel remorse. It is an accident of lower natures—natures that are capable of doing actions under one set of impulses, which they regret when another set comes uppermost in turn. That implies a want of balance, an imperfect co-ordination of parts and passions. The perfect character is consistent with itself; shame and repentance are confessions of weakness. For my part, I never do anything without having first deliberately decided that it is the best or the only thing to do; and having so done it, I do not draw back like a girl from the necessary consequences of my own act. No fluttering or running away for me. Still, I must admit that all that blood does look very ghastly. Poor old gentleman! I believe he really died almost without knowing it, and that is certainly a great comfort to one under the circumstances."

He took King Charlie tenderly in his hands, without touching the wounded leg, and drew his pocket handkerchief softly from his pocket. "Poor beastie," he said aloud, holding out the cut limb before him, "you are badly hurt, I'm afraid; but it wasn't my fault. We must see what we can do for you." Then he wrapped the handkerchief deftly around it, without letting any blood show through, pressed the dog

close against his breast, and picked up the knife gingerly by the reeking handle. "A fool of a fellow would throw it into the river," he thought, with a curl of his graceful lip. "They always dredge the river after these incidents. I shall just stick it down a hole in the hedge a hundred yards off. The police have no invention, dull donkeys; they never dredge the hedges." And he thrust it well down a disused rabbit burrow, filling in the top neatly with loose mould.

Walter Dene meant to have gone home quietly and said evensong, leaving the discovery of the body to be made at haphazard by others, but this unfortunate accident to King Charlie compelled him against his will to give the first alarm. It was absolutely necessary to take the dog to the veterinary at once, or the poor little fellow might bleed to death incontinently. "One's best efforts," he thought, "are always liable to these unfortunate *contretemps*. I meant merely to remove a superfluous person from an uncongenial environment; yet I can't manage it without at the same time seriously injuring a harmless little creature that I really love." And with one last glance at the lifeless thing behind him, he took his way regretfully along the ordinary path back towards the peaceful village of Churnside.

Halfway down the lane, at the entrance to the village, he met one of his parishioners. "Tom," he said boldly, "have you seen anything of the vicar? I'm afraid he's got hurt somehow. Here's poor little King Charlie come limping back with his leg cut."

"He went down the road, zur, 'arf an hour zince, and I arn't zeen him afterwards."

"Tell the servants at the vicarage to look around the grounds, then; I'm afraid he has fallen and hurt himself. I must take the dog at once to Perkins's, or else I shall be late for evensong."

The man went off straight toward the vicarage, and Walter Dene turned immediately with the dog in his arms into the village veterinary's.

II

The servants from the vicarage were not the first persons to hit upon the dead body of the vicar. Joe Harley, the poacher, was out reconnoitring that afternoon in the vicar's preserves; and five minutes after Walter Dene had passed down the far side of the hedge, Joe Harley skulked noiselessly from the orchard up to the cover of the gate by Selbury Copse. He crept through the open end by the post (for it was against Joe's principles under any circumstances to climb over an obstacle of any sort, and so needlessly expose himself), and he was just going to slink off along the other hedge, having wires and traps in his pocket, when his boot struck violently against a soft object in the ditch underfoot. It struck so violently that it crushed in the object with the force of the impact; and when Joe came to look at what the object might be, he found to his horror that it was the bruised and livid face of the old parson. Joe had had a brush with keepers more than once, and had spent several months of seclusion in Dorchester Gaol; but, in spite of his familiarity with minor forms of lawlessness, he was moved enough in all conscience by this awful and unexpected discovery. He turned the body over clumsily with his hands, and saw that it had been stabbed in the back once only. In doing so he trod in a little blood, and got a drop or two on his sleeve and trousers; for the pool was bigger now, and Joe was not so handy or dainty with his fingers as the idyllic curate.

It was an awful dilemma, indeed, for a confirmed and convicted poacher. Should he give the alarm then and there, boldly, trusting to his innocence for vindication, and helping the police to discover the murderer? Why, that would be sheer suicide, no doubt; "for who but would believe," he thought, "'twas me as done it?" Or should he slink away quietly and say nothing, leaving others to find the body as best they might? That was dangerous enough in its way if anybody saw him, but not so dangerous as the other course.

In an evil hour for his own chances Joe Harley chose that worse counsel, and slunk off in his familiar crouching fashion towards the opposite corner of the copse.

On the way he heard John's voice holloaing for his master, and kept close to the hedge till he had quite turned the corner. But John had caught a glimpse of him too, and John did not forget it when, a few minutes later, he came upon the horrid sight beside the gate of Selbury Copse.

Meanwhile Walter had taken King Charlie to the veterinary's, and had his leg bound and bandaged securely. He had also gone down to the church, got out his surplice, and begun to put it on in the vestry for evensong, when a messenger came at hot haste from the vicarage, with news that Master Walter must come up at once, for the vicar was murdered.

"Murdered!" Walter Dene said to himself slowly half aloud; "murdered! how horrible! Murdered!" It was an ugly word, and he turned it over with a genuine thrill of horror. That was what they would say of him if ever the thing came to be discovered! What an inappropriate classification!

He threw aside the surplice, and rushed up hurriedly to the vicarage. Already the servants had brought in the body, and laid it out in the clothes it wore, on the vicar's own bed. Walter Dene went in, shuddering, to look at it. To his utter amazement, the face was battered in horribly and almost unrecognizably by a blow or kick! What could that hideous mutilation mean? He could not imagine. It was an awful mystery. Great heavens! just fancy if any one were to take it into his head that he, Walter Dene, had done *that*—had kicked a defenceless old gentleman brutally about the face like a common London ruffian! The idea was too horrible to be borne for a moment. It unmanned him utterly, and he hid his face between his two hands and sobbed aloud like one broken-hearted. "This day's work has been too much for my nerves," he thought to himself between the sobs; "but perhaps it is just as well I should give way now completely."

That night was mainly taken up with the formalities of all such cases; and when at last Walter Dene went off, tired and nerve-worn, to bed, about midnight, he could not sleep much for thinking of the mystery. The murder itself didn't trouble him greatly; that was over and past now, and he felt sure his precautions had been amply sufficient to protect him even from the barest suspicion; but he couldn't fathom the mystery of that battered and mutilated face! Somebody must have seen the corpse between the time of the murder and the discovery! Who could that somebody have been? and what possible motive could he have had for such a horrible piece of purposeless brutality?

As for the servants, in solemn conclave in the hall, they had unanimously but one theory to account for all the facts: some poacher or other, for choice Joe Harley, had come across the vicar in the copse, with gun and traps in hand. The wretch had seen he was discovered, had felled the poor old vicar by a blow in the face with the butt-end of his rifle, and after he fell, fainting, had stabbed him for greater security in the back. That was such an obvious solution of the difficulty, that nobody in the servants' hall had a moment's hesitation in accepting it.

When Walter heard next morning early that Joe Harley had been arrested overnight, on John's information, his horror and surprise at the news were wholly unaffected. Here was another new difficulty, indeed. "When I did the thing," he said to himself, "I never thought of that possibility. I took it for granted it would be a mystery, a problem for the local police (who, of course, could no more solve it than they could solve the *pons-asinorum*), but it never struck me they would arrest an innocent person on the charge instead of me. This is horrible. It's so easy to make out a case against a poacher, and hang him for it, on suspicion. One's whole sense of justice revolts against the thing. After all, there's a great deal to be said in favour of the ordinary commonplace morality: it prevents complications. A man of delicate sensibilities

oughtn't to kill anybody; he lets himself in for all kinds of unexpected contingencies, without knowing it."

At the coroner's inquest things looked very black indeed for Joe Harley. Walter gave his evidence first, showing how he had found King Charlie wounded in the lane; and then the others gave theirs, as to the search for and finding of the body. John in particular swore to having seen a man's back and head slinking away by the hedge while they were looking for the vicar; and that back and head he felt sure were Joe Harley's. To Walter's infinite horror and disgust, the coroner's jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against the poor poacher. What other verdict could they possibly have given in accordance with such evidence?

The trial of Joe Harley for the wilful murder of the Reverend Arthur Dene was fixed for the next Dorchester Assizes. In the interval, Walter Dene, for the first time in his placid life, knew what it was to undergo a mental struggle. Whatever happened, he could not let Joe Harley be hanged for this murder. His whole soul rose up within him in loathing for such an act of hideous injustice. For though Walter Dene's code of morality was certainly not the conventional one, as he so often boasted to himself, he was not by any means without any code of morals of any sort. He could commit a murder where he thought it necessary, but he could not let an innocent man suffer in his stead. His ethical judgment on that point was just as clear and categorical as the judgment which told him he was in duty bound to murder his uncle. For Walter did not argue with himself on moral questions: he perceived the right and necessary thing intuitively; he was a law to himself, and he obeyed his own law implicitly, for good or for evil. Such men are capable of horrible and diabolically deliberate crimes; but they are capable of great and genuine self-sacrifices also.

Walter made no secret in the village of his disinclination to believe in Joe Harley's guilt. Joe was a rough fellow, he said, certainly, and he had no objection to taking a pheasant

or two, and even to having a free fight with the keepers; but, after all, our game laws were an outrageous piece of class legislation, and he could easily understand how the poor, whose sense of justice they outraged, should be so set against them. He could not think Joe Harley was capable of a detestable crime. Besides, he had seen him himself within a few minutes before and after the murder. Everybody thought it such a proof of the young parson's generous and kindly disposition; he had certainly the charity which thinketh no evil. Even though his own uncle had been brutally murdered on his own estate, he checked his natural feelings of resentment, and refused to believe that one of his own parishioners could have been guilty of the crime. Nay, more, so anxious was he that substantial justice should be done the accused, and so confident was he of his innocence, that he promised to provide counsel for him at his own expense; and he provided two of the ablest barristers on the Western circuit.

Before the trial, Walter Dene had come, after a terrible internal struggle, to an awful resolution. He would do everything he could for Joe Harley; but if the verdict went against him, he was resolved, then and there, in open court, to confess, before judge and jury, the whole truth. It would be a horrible thing for Christina; he knew that; but he could not love Christina so much, "loved he not honour more;" and honour, after his own fashion, he certainly loved dearly. Though he might be false to all that all the world thought right, it was ingrained in the very fibre of his soul to be true to his own inner nature at least. Night after night he lay awake, tossing on his bed, and picturing to his mind's eye every detail of that terrible disclosure. The jury would bring in a verdict of guilty: then, before the judge put on his black cap, he, Walter, would stand up, and tell them that he could not let another man hang for his crime; he would have the whole truth out before them; and then he would die, for he would have taken a little bottle of poison at the first sound of the verdict. As for Christina—oh, Christina!—Walter

Dene could not dare to let himself think upon that. It was horrible; it was unendurable; it was torture a thousand times worse than dying: but still, he must and would face it. For in certain phases, Walter Dene, forger and murderer as he was, could be positively heroic.

The day of the trial came, and Walter Dene, pale and haggard with much vigil, walked in a dream and faintly from his hotel to the court-house. Everybody present noticed what a deep effect the shock of his uncle's death had had upon him. He was thinner and more bloodless than usual, and his dulled eyes looked black and sunken in their sockets. Indeed, he seemed to have suffered far more intensely than the prisoner himself, who walked in firmer and more erect, and took his seat doggedly in the familiar dock. He had been there more than once before, to say the truth, though never before on such an errand. Yet mere habit, when he got there, made him at once assume the hang-dog look of the consciously guilty.

Walter sat and watched and listened, still in a dream, but without once betraying in his face the real depth of his innermost feelings. In the body of the court he saw Joe's wife, weeping profusely and ostentatiously, after the fashion considered to be correct by her class; and though he pitied her from the bottom of his heart, he could only think by contrast of Christina. What were that good woman's fears and sorrows by the side of the grief and shame and unspeakable horror he might have to bring upon his Christina? Pray Heaven the shock, if it came, might kill her outright; that would at least be better than that she should live long years to remember. More than judge, or jury, or prisoner, Walter Dene saw everywhere, behind the visible shadows that thronged the court, that one persistent prospective picture of heart-broken Christina.

The evidence for the prosecution told with damning force against the prisoner. He was a notorious poacher; the vicar was a game-preserved. He had poached more than once on

the ground of the vicarage. He was shown by numerous witnesses to have had an animus against the vicar. He had been seen, not in the face, to be sure, but still seen and recognized, slinking away, immediately after the fact, from the scene of the murder. And the prosecution had found stains of blood, believed by scientific experts to be human, on the clothing he had worn when he was arrested. Walter Dene listened now with terrible, unabated earnestness, for he knew that in reality it was he himself who was upon his trial. He himself, and Christina's happiness; for if the poacher were found guilty, he was firmly resolved, beyond hope of respite, to tell all, and face the unspeakable.

The defence seemed indeed a weak and feeble theory. Somebody unknown had committed the murder, and this somebody, seen from behind, had been mistaken by John for Joe Harley. The blood-stains need not be human, as the cross-examination went to show, but were only known by counter-experts to be mammalian—perhaps a rabbit's. Every poacher—and it was admitted that Joe was a poacher—was liable to get his clothes blood-stained. Grant they were human, Joe, it appeared, had himself once shot off his little finger. All these points came out from the examination of the earlier witnesses. At last, counsel put the curate himself into the box, and proceeded to examine him briefly as a witness for the defence.

Walter Dene stepped, pale and haggard still, into the witness-box. He had made up his mind to make one final effort "for Christina's happiness." He fumbled nervously all the time at a small glass phial in his pocket, but he answered all questions without a moment's hesitation, and he kept down his emotions with a wonderful composure which excited the admiration of everybody present. There was a general hush to hear him. Did he see the prisoner, Joseph Harley, on the day of the murder? Yes, three times. When was the first occasion? From the library window, just before the vicar left the house. What was Joseph Harley then doing? Walking in

the opposite direction from the copse. Did Joseph Harley recognize him? Yes, he touched his hat to him. When was the second occasion? About ten minutes later, when he, Walter, was leaving the vicarage for a stroll. Did Joseph Harley then recognize him? Yes, he touched his hat again, and the curate said, "Good morning, Joe; a fine day for walking." When was the third time? Ten minutes later again, when he was returning from the lane, carrying wounded little King Charlie. Would it have been physically possible for the prisoner to go from the vicarage to the spot where the murder was committed, and back again, in the interval between the first two occasions? It would not. Would it have been physically possible for the prisoner to do so in the interval between the second and third occasions? It would not.

"Then in your opinion, Mr. Dene, it is physically impossible that Joseph Harley can have committed this murder?"

"In my opinion, it is physically impossible."

While Walter Dene solemnly swore amid dead silence to this treble lie, he did not dare to look Joe Harley once in the face; and while Joe Harley listened in amazement to this unexpected assistance to his case—for counsel, suspecting a mistaken identity, had not questioned him too closely on the subject—he had presence of mind enough not to let his astonishment show upon his stolid features. But when Walter had finished his evidence in chief, he stole a glance at Joe; and for a moment their eyes met. Then Walter's fell in utter self-humiliation; and he said to himself fiercely, "I would not so have debased and degraded myself before any man to save my own life—what is my life worth me, after all?—but to save Christina, to save Christina, to save Christina! I have brought all this upon myself for Christina's sake."

Meanwhile, Joe Harley was asking himself curiously what could be the meaning of this new move on parson's part. It was deliberate perjury, Joe felt sure, for parson could not have mistaken another person for him three times over; but what good end for himself could parson hope to gain by it?

If it was he who had murdered the vicar (as Joe strongly suspected), why did he not try to press the charge home against the first person who happened to be accused, instead of committing a distinct perjury on purpose to compass his acquittal? Joe Harley, with his simple every-day criminal mind, could not be expected to unravel the intricacies of so complex a personality as Walter Dene's. But even there, on trial for his life, he could not help wondering what on earth young parson could be driving at in this business.

The judge summed up with the usual luminously obvious alternate platitudes. If the jury thought that John had really seen Joe Harley, and that the curate was mistaken in the person whom he thrice saw, or was mistaken once only out of the thrice, or had miscalculated the time between each occurrence, or the time necessary to cover the ground to the gate, then they would find the prisoner guilty of wilful murder. If, on the other hand, they believed John had judged hastily, and that the curate had really seen the prisoner three separate times, and that he had rightly calculated all the intervals, then they would find the prisoner not guilty. The prisoner's case rested entirely upon the *alibi*. Supposing they thought there was a doubt in the matter, they should give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt. Walter noticed that the judge said in every other case, "If you believe the witness So-and-so," but that in his case he made no such discourteous reservation. As a matter of fact, the one person whose conduct nobody for a moment dreamt of calling in question was the real murderer.

The jury retired for more than an hour. During all that time two men stood there in mortal suspense, intent and haggard, both upon their trial, but not both equally. The prisoner in the dock fixed his arms in a dogged and sullen attitude, the colour half gone from his brown cheek, and his eyes straining with excitement, but showing no outward sign of any emotion except the craven fear of death. Walter Dene stood almost fainting in the body of the court, his bloodless

fingers still fumbling nervously at the little phial, and his face deadly pale with the awful pallor of a devouring horror. His heart scarcely beat at all, but at each long slow pulsation he could feel it throb distinctly within his bosom. He saw or heard nothing before him, but kept his aching eyes fixed steadily on the door by which the jury were to enter. Junior counsel nudged one another to notice his agitation, and whispered that that poor young curate had evidently never seen a man tried for his life before.

At last the jury entered. Joe and Walter waited, each in his own manner, breathless for the verdict. "Do you find the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty of wilful murder?" Walter took the little phial from his pocket, and held it carefully between his finger and thumb. The awful moment had come; the next word would decide the fate of himself and Christina. The foreman of the jury looked up solemnly, and answered with slow distinctness, "Not guilty." The prisoner leaned back vacantly, and wiped his forehead; but there was an awful cry of relief from one mouth in the body of the court, and Walter Dene sank back into the arms of the bystanders, exhausted with suspense and overcome by the reaction. The crowd remarked among themselves that young Parson Dene was too tender-hearted a man to come into court at a criminal trial. He would break his heart to see even a dog hanged, let alone his fellow-Christians. As for Joe Harley, it was universally admitted that he had had a narrow squeak of it, and that he had got off better than he deserved. The jury gave him the benefit of the doubt.

As soon as all the persons concerned had returned to Churnside, Walter sent at once for Joe Harley. The poacher came to see him in the vicarage library. He was elated and coarsely exultant with his victory, as a relief from the strain he had suffered, after the manner of all vulgar natures.

"Joe," said the clergyman slowly, motioning him into a chair at the other side of the desk, "I know that after this

trial Churnside will not be a pleasant place to hold you. All your neighbours believe, in spite of the verdict, that you killed the vicar. I feel sure, however, that you did not commit this murder. Therefore, as some compensation for the suffering of mind to which you have been put, I think it well to send you and your wife and family to Australia or Canada, whichever you like best. I propose also to make you a present of a hundred pounds, to set you up in your new home."

"Make it five hundred, passon," Joe said, looking at him significantly.

Walter smiled quietly, and did not flinch in any way. "I said a hundred," he continued calmly, "and I will make it only a hundred. I should have had no objection to making it five, except for the manner in which you ask it. But you evidently mistake the motive of my gift. I give it out of pure compassion for you, and not out of any other feeling whatsoever."

"Very well, passon," said Joe sullenly, "I accept it."

"You mistake again," Walter went on blandly, for he was himself again now. "You are not to accept it as terms; you are to thank me for it as a pure present. I see we two partially understand each other; but it is important you should understand me exactly as I mean it. Joe Harley, listen to me seriously. I have saved your life. If I had been a man of a coarse and vulgar nature, if I had been like you in a similar predicament, I would have pressed the case against you for obvious personal reasons, and you would have been hanged for it. But I did not press it, because I felt convinced of your innocence, and my sense of justice rose irresistibly against it. I did the best I could to save you; I risked my own reputation to save you; and I have no hesitation now in telling you that to the best of my belief, if the verdict had gone against you, the person who really killed the vicar, accidentally or intentionally, meant to have given himself up to the police, rather than let an innocent man suffer."

"Passon," said Joe Harley, looking at him intently, "I believe as you're tellin' me the truth. I zeen as much in that person's face afore the verdict."

There was a solemn pause for a moment; and then Walter Dene said slowly, "Now that you have withdrawn your claim as a claim, I will stretch a point and make it five hundred. It is little enough for what you have suffered. But I, too, have suffered terribly, terribly."

"Thank you, passon," Joe answered. "I zeen as you were turble anxious."

There was again a moment's pause. Then Walter Dene asked quietly, "How did the vicar's face come to be so bruised and battered?"

"I stumbled up agin 'im accidental like, and didn't know I'd kicked 'un till I'd done it. Must 'a been just a few minutes after you'd 'a left 'un."

"Joe," said the curate in his calmest tone, "you had better go; the money will be sent to you shortly. But if you ever see my face again, or speak or write a word of this to me, you shall not have a penny of it, but shall be prosecuted for intimidation. A hundred before you leave, four hundred in Australia. Now go."

"Very well, passon," Joe answered; and he went.

"Pah!" said the curate with a face of disgust, shutting the door after him, and lighting a perfumed pastille in his little Chinese porcelain incense-burner, as if to fumigate the room from the poacher's offensive presence. "Pah! to think that these affairs should compel one to humiliate and abase one's self before a vulgar clod like that! To think that all his life long that fellow will virtually know—and misinterpret—my secret. He is incapable of understanding that I did it as a duty to Christina. Well, he will never dare to tell it, that's certain, for nobody would believe him if he did; and he may congratulate himself heartily that he's got well out of this difficulty. It will be the luckiest thing in the end that ever

happened to him. And now I hope this little episode is finally over."

When the Churnside public learned that Walter Dene meant to carry his belief in Joe Harley's innocence so far as to send him and his family at his own expense out to Australia, they held that the young parson's charity and guilelessness was really, as the doctor said, almost Quixotic. And when, in his anxiety to detect and punish the real murderer, he offered a reward of five hundred pounds from his own pocket for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of the criminal, the Churnside people laughed quietly at his extraordinary childlike simplicity of heart. The real murderer had been caught and tried at Dorchester Assizes, they said, and had only got off by the skin of his teeth because Walter himself had come forward and sworn to a quite improbable and inconclusive *alibi*. There was plenty of time for Joe to have got to the gate by the short cut, and that he did so everybody at Churnside felt morally certain. Indeed, a few years later a blood-stained bowie-knife was found in the hedge not far from the scene of the murder, and the gamekeeper "could almost 'a took his Bible oath he'd zeen just such a knife along o' Joe Harley."

That was not the end of Walter Dene's Quixotisms, however. When the will was read, it turned out that almost everything was left to the young parson; and who could deserve it better, or spend it more charitably? But Walter, though he would not for the world seem to cast any slight or disrespect upon his dear uncle's memory, did not approve of customs of primogeniture, and felt bound to share the estate equally with his brother Arthur. "Strange," said the head of the firm of Watson and Blenkiron to himself, when he read the little paragraph about this generous conduct in the paper; "I thought the instructions were to leave it to his nephew Arthur, not to his nephew Walter; but there, one forgets and confuses names of people that one does not know

so easily." "Gracious goodness!" thought the engrossing clerk; "surely it was the other way on. I wonder if I can have gone and copied the wrong names in the wrong places?" But in a big London business, nobody notes these things as they would have been noted in Churnside; the vicar was always a changeable, pernickety, huffy old fellow, and very likely he had had a reverse will drawn up afterwards by his country lawyer. All the world only thought that Walter Dene's generosity was really almost ridiculous, even in a parson. When he was married to Christina, six months afterwards, everybody said so charming a girl was well mated with so excellent and admirable a husband.

And he really did make a very tender and loving husband and father. Christina believed in him always, for he did his best to foster and keep alive her faith. He would have given up active clerical duty if he could, never having liked it (for he was above hypocrisy), but Christina was against the project, and his bishop would not hear of it. The Church could ill afford to lose such a man as Mr. Dene, the bishop said, in these troubled times; and he begged him as a personal favour to accept the living of Churnside, which was in his gift. But Walter did not like the place, and asked for another living instead, which, being of less value—"so like Mr. Dene to think nothing of the temporalities,"—the bishop even more graciously granted. He has since published a small volume of dainty little poems on uncut paper, considered by some critics as rather pagan in tone for a clergyman, but universally allowed to be extremely graceful, the perfection of poetical form with much delicate mastery of poetical matter. And everybody knows that the author is almost certain to be offered the first vacant canonry in his own cathedral. As for the little episode, he himself has almost forgotten all about it; for those who think a murderer must feel remorse his whole life long, are trying to read their own emotional nature into the wholly dispassionate character of Walter Dene.

They Can Only Hang You Once

D A S H I E L L H A M M E T T

SAMUEL SPADE said: "My name is Ronald Ames. I want to see Mr. Binnett—Mr. Timothy Binnett."

"Mr. Binnett is resting now, sir," the butler replied hesitantly.

"Will you find out when I can see him? It's important." Spade cleared his throat. "I'm—uh—just back from Australia, and it's about some of his properties there."

The butler turned on his heel while saying "I'll see, sir," and was going up the front stairs before he had finished speaking.

Spade made and lit a cigarette.

The butler came downstairs again. "I'm sorry; he can't be disturbed now, but Mr. Wallace Binnett—Mr. Timothy's nephew—will see you."

Spade said, "Thanks," and followed the butler upstairs.

Wallace Binnett was a slender, handsome, dark man of about Spade's age—thirty-eight—who rose smiling from a brocaded chair, said, "How do you do, Mr. Ames?" waved his hand at another chair, and sat down again. "You're from Australia?"

"Got in this morning."

"You're a business associate of Uncle Tim's?"

Spade smiled and shook his head. "Hardly that, but I've some information I think he ought to have—quick."

Wallace Binnett looked thoughtfully at the floor, then up

at Spade. "I'll do my best to persuade him to see you, Mr. Ames, but, frankly, I don't know."

Spade seemed mildly surprised. "Why?"

Binnett shrugged. "He's peculiar sometimes. Understand, his mind seems perfectly all right, but he has the testiness and eccentricity of an old man in ill health and—well—at times he can be difficult."

Spade asked slowly: "He's already refused to see me?"

"Yes."

Spade rose from his chair. His blond satan's face was expressionless.

Binnett raised a hand quickly. "Wait, wait," he said. "I'll do what I can to make him change his mind. Perhaps if—" His dark eyes suddenly became wary. "You're not simply trying to sell him something, are you?"

"No."

The wary gleam went out of Binnett's eyes. "Well, then, I think I can—"

A young woman came in crying angrily, "Wally, that old fool has—" She broke off with a hand to her breast when she saw Spade.

Spade and Binnett had risen together. Binnett said suavely: "Joyce, this is Mr. Ames. My sister-in-law, Joyce Court."

Spade bowed.

Joyce Court uttered a short, embarrassed laugh and said: "Please excuse my whirlwind entrance." She was a tall, blue-eyed, dark woman of twenty-four or -five with good shoulders and a strong, slim body. Her features made up in warmth what they lacked in regularity. She wore wide-legged blue satin pajamas.

Binnett smiled good-naturedly at her and asked: "Now what's all the excitement?"

Anger darkened her eyes again and she started to speak. Then she looked at Spade and said: "But we shouldn't bore Mr. Ames with our stupid domestic affairs. If—" She hesitated.

Spade bowed again. "Sure," he said, "certainly."

"I won't be a minute," Binnett promised, and left the room with her.

Spade went to the open doorway through which they had vanished and, standing just inside, listened. Their footsteps became inaudible. Nothing else could be heard. Spade was standing there—his yellow-gray eyes dreamy—when he heard the scream. It was a woman's scream, high and shrill with terror. Spade was through the doorway when he heard the shot. It was a pistol shot, magnified, reverberated by walls and ceilings.

Twenty feet from the doorway Spade found a staircase, and went up it three steps at a time. He turned to the left. Halfway down the hallway a woman lay on her back on the floor.

Wallace Binnett knelt beside her, fondling one of her hands desperately, crying in a low, beseeching voice: "Darling, Molly, darling!"

Joyce Court stood behind him and wrung her hands while tears streaked her cheeks.

The woman on the floor resembled Joyce Court but was older, and her face had a hardness the younger one's had not.

"She's dead, she's been killed," Wallace Binnett said incredulously, raising his white face towards Spade. When Binnett moved his head Spade could see the round hole in the woman's tan dress over her heart and the dark stain which was rapidly spreading below it.

Spade touched Joyce Court's arm. "Police, emergency hospital—phone," he said. As she ran towards the stairs he addressed Wallace Binnett: "Who did—"

A voice groaned feebly behind Spade.

He turned swiftly. Through an open doorway he could see an old man in white pajamas lying sprawled across a rumpled bed. His head, a shoulder, an arm dangled over the edge of the bed. His other hand held his throat tightly. He

groaned again and his eyelids twitched, but did not open.

Spade lifted the old man's head and shoulders and put them up on the pillows. The old man groaned again and took his hand from his throat. His throat was red with half a dozen bruises. He was a gaunt man with a seamed face that probably exaggerated his age.

A glass of water was on a table beside the bed. Spade put water on the old man's face and, when the old man's eyes twitched again, leaned down and growled softly: "Who did it?"

The twitching eyelids went up far enough to show a narrow strip of blood-shot gray eyes. The old man spoke painfully, putting a hand to his throat again: "A man—he—" He coughed.

Spade made an impatient grimace. His lips almost touched the old man's ear. "Where'd he go?" His voice was urgent.

A gaunt hand moved weakly to indicate the rear of the house and fell back on the bed.

The butler and two frightened female servants had joined Wallace Binnett beside the dead woman in the hallway.

"Who did it?" Spade asked them.

They stared at him blankly.

"Somebody look after the old man," he growled, and went down the hallway.

At the end of the hallway was a rear staircase. He descended two flights and went through a pantry into the kitchen. He saw nobody. The kitchen door was shut but, when he tried it, not locked. He crossed a narrow back yard to a gate that was shut, not locked. He opened the gate. There was nobody in the narrow alley behind it.

He sighed, shut the gate, and returned to the house.

Spade sat comfortably slack in a deep leather chair in a room that ran across the front second story of Wallace Binnett's house. There were shelves of books and the lights were on. The window showed outer darkness weakly diluted by a distant street lamp. Facing Spade, Detective Sergeant Pol-

haus—a big, carelessly shaven, florid man in dark clothes that needed pressing—was sprawled in another leather chair; Lieutenant Dundy—smaller, compactly built, square-faced—stood with legs apart, head thrust a little forward, in the center of the room.

Spade was saying: “. . . and the doctor would only let me talk to the old man a couple of minutes. We can try it again when he’s rested a little, but it doesn’t look like he knows much. He was catching a nap and he woke up with somebody’s hands on his throat dragging him around the bed. The best he got was a one-eyed look at the fellow choking him. A big fellow, he says, with a soft hat pulled down over his eyes, dark, needing a shave. Sounds like Tom.” Spade nodded at Polhaus.

The detective sergeant chuckled, but Dundy said, “Go on,” curtly.

Spade grinned and went on: “He’s pretty far gone when he hears Mrs. Binnett scream at the door. The hands go away from his throat and he hears the shot and just before passing out he gets a flash of the big fellow heading for the rear of the house and Mrs. Binnett tumbling down on the hall floor. He says he never saw the big fellow before.”

“What size gun was it?” Dundy asked.

“Thirty-eight. Well, nobody in the house is much more help. Wallace and his sister-in-law, Joyce, were in her room, so they say, and didn’t see anything but the dead woman when they ran out, though they think they heard something that could’ve been somebody running downstairs—the back stairs.

“The butler—his name’s Jarboe—was in here when he heard the scream and shot, so he says. Irene Kelly, the maid, was down on the ground floor, so she says. The cook, Margaret Finn, was in her room—third floor back—and didn’t even hear anything, so she says. She’s deaf as a post, so everybody else says. The back door and gate were unlocked, but are supposed to be kept locked, so everybody says. No-

body says they were in or around the kitchen or yard at the time." Spade spread his hands in a gesture of finality. "That's the crop."

Dundy shook his head. "Not exactly," he said. "How come you were here?"

Spade's face brightened. "Maybe my client killed her," he said. "He's Wallace cousin, Ira Binnett. Know him?"

Dundy shook his head. His blue eyes were hard and suspicious.

"He's a San Francisco lawyer," Spade said, "respectable and all that. A couple of days ago he came to me with a story about his uncle Timothy, a miserly old skinflint, lousy with money and pretty well broken up by hard living. He was the black sheep of the family. None of them had heard of him for years. But six or eight months ago he showed up in pretty bad shape every way except financially—he seems to have taken a lot of money out of Australia—wanting to spend his last days with his only living relatives, his nephews Wallace and Ira.

"That was all right with them. 'Only living relatives' meant 'only heirs' in their language. But by and by the nephews began to think it was better to be an heir than to be one of a couple of heirs—twice as good, in fact—and started fiddling for the inside track with the old man. At least, that's what Ira told me about Wallace, and I wouldn't be surprised if Wallace would say the same thing about Ira, though Wallace seems to be the harder up of the two. Anyhow, the nephews fell out, and then Uncle Tim, who had been staying at Ira's, came over here. That was a couple of months ago, and Ira hasn't seen Uncle Tim since, and hasn't been able to get in touch with him by phone or mail.

"That's what he wanted a private detective about. He didn't think Uncle Tim would come to any harm here—oh, no, he went to a lot of trouble to make that clear—but he thought maybe undue pressure was being brought to bear on the old boy, or he was being hornswoggled somehow, and

at least being told lies about his loving nephew Ira. He wanted to know what was what. I waited until today, when a boat from Australia docked, and came up here as a Mr. Ames with some important information for Uncle Tim about his properties down there. All I wanted was fifteen minutes alone with him." Spade frowned thoughtfully. "Well, I didn't get them. Wallace told me the old man refused to see me. I don't know."

Suspicion had deepened in Dundy's cold blue eyes. "And where is this Ira Binnett now?" he asked.

Spade's yellow-gray eyes were as guileless as his voice. "I wish I knew. I phoned his house and office and left word for him to come right over, but I'm afraid—"

Knuckles knocked sharply twice on the other side of the room's one door. The three men in the room turned to face the door.

Dundy called, "Come in."

The door was opened by a sunburned blond policeman whose left hand held the right wrist of a plump man of forty or forty-five in well-fitting gray clothes. The policeman pushed the plump man into the room. "Found him monkeying with the kitchen door," he said.

Spade looked up and said: "Ah!" His tone expressed satisfaction. "Mr. Ira Binnett, Lieutenant Dundy, Sergeant Polhaus."

Ira Binnett said rapidly: "Mr. Spade, will you tell this man that—"

Dundy addressed the policeman: "All right. Good work. You can leave him."

The policeman moved a hand vaguely towards his cap and went away.

Dundy glowered at Ira Binnett and demanded, "Well?"

Binnett looked from Dundy to Spade. "Has something—"

Spade said: "Better tell him why you were at the back door instead of the front."

Ira Binnett suddenly blushed. He cleared his throat in

embarrassment. He said: "I—uh—I should explain. It wasn't my fault, of course, but when Jarboe—he's the butler—phoned me that Uncle Tim wanted to see me he told me he'd leave the kitchen door unlocked, so Wallace wouldn't have to know I'd—"

"What'd he want to see you about?" Dundy asked.

"I don't know. He didn't say. He said it was very important."

"Didn't you get my message?" Spade asked.

Ira Binnett's eyes widened. "No. What was it? Has anything happened? What is—"

Spade was moving toward the door. "Go ahead," he said to Dundy. "I'll be right back."

He shut the door carefully behind him and went up to the third floor.

The butler Jarboe was on his knees at Timothy Binnett's door with an eye to the keyhole. On the floor beside him was a tray holding an egg in an egg-cup, toast, a pot of coffee, china, silver, and a napkin.

Spade said: "Your toast's going to get cold."

Jarboe, scrambling to his feet, almost upsetting the coffee-pot in his haste, his face red and sheepish, stammered: "I—er—beg your pardon, sir. I wanted to make sure Mr. Timothy was awake before I took this in." He picked up the tray. "I didn't want to disturb his rest if—"

Spade, who had reached the door, said, "Sure, sure," and bent over to put his eye to the keyhole. When he straightened up he said in a mildly complaining tone: "You can't see the bed—only a chair and part of the window."

The butler replied quickly: "Yes, sir, I found that out."

Spade laughed.

The butler coughed, seemed about to say something, but did not. He hesitated, then knocked lightly on the door.

A tired voice said, "Come in."

Spade asked quickly in a low voice: "Where's Miss Court?"

"In her room, I think, sir, the second door on the left," the butler said.

The tired voice inside the room said petulantly: "Well, come on in."

The butler opened the door and went in. Through the door, before the butler shut it, Spade caught a glimpse of Timothy Binnett propped up on pillows in his bed.

Spade went to the second door on the left and knocked. The door was opened almost immediately by Joyce Court. She stood in the doorway, not smiling, not speaking.

He said: "Miss Court, when you came into the room where I was with your brother-in-law you said, 'Wally, that old fool has—' Meaning Timothy?"

She stared at Spade for a moment. Then: "Yes."

"Mind telling me what the rest of the sentence would have been?"

She said slowly: "I don't know who you really are or why you ask, but I don't mind telling you. It would have been 'sent for Ira.' Jarboe had just told me."

"Thanks."

She shut the door before he had turned away.

He returned to Timothy Binnett's door and knocked on it.

"Who is it now?" the old man's voice demanded.

Spade opened the door. The old man was sitting up in bed.

Spade said: "This Jarboe was peeping through your keyhole a few minutes ago," and returned to the library.

Ira Binnett, seated in the chair Spade had occupied, was saying to Dundy and Polhaus: "And Wallace got caught in the crash, like most of us, but he seems to have juggled accounts trying to save himself. He was expelled from the Stock Exchange."

Dundy waved a hand to indicate the room and its furnishings. "Pretty classy layout for a man that's busted."

"His wife has some money," Ira Binnett said, "and he always lived beyond his means."

Dundy scowled at Binnett. "And you really think he and his missus weren't on good terms?"

"I don't think it," Binnett replied evenly. "I know it."

Dundy nodded. "And you know he's got a yen for the sister-in-law, this Court?"

"I don't know that. But I've heard plenty of gossip to the same effect."

Dundy made a growling noise in his throat, then asked sharply: "How does the old man's will read?"

"I don't know. I don't know whether he's made one." He addressed Spade, now earnestly: "I've told everything I know, every single thing."

Dundy said, "It's not enough." He jerked a thumb at the door. "Show him where to wait, Tom, and let's have the widower in again."

Big Polhaus said, "Right," went out with Ira Binnett, and returned with Wallace Binnett, whose face was hard and pale.

Dundy asked: "Has your uncle made a will?"

"I don't know," Binnett replied.

Spade put the next question, softly: "Did your wife?"

Binnett's mouth tightened in a mirthless smile. He spoke deliberately: "I'm going to say some things I'd rather not have to say. My wife, properly, had no money. When I got into financial trouble some time ago I made some property over to her, to save it. She turned it into money without my knowing about it till afterwards. She paid our bills—our living expenses—out of it, but she refused to return it to me and she assured me that in no event—whether she lived or died or we stayed together or were divorced—would I ever be able to get hold of a penny of it. I believed her, and still do."

"You wanted a divorce?" Dundy asked.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"It wasn't a happy marriage."

"Joyce Court?"

Binnett's face flushed. He said stiffly: "I admire Joyce Court tremendously, but I'd've wanted a divorce anyway."

Spade said: "And you're sure—still absolutely sure—you don't know anybody who fits your uncle's description of the man who choked him?"

"Absolutely sure."

The sound of the doorbell ringing came faintly into the room.

Dundy said sourly, "That'll do."

Binnett went out.

Polhaus said: "That guy's as wrong as they make them. And—"

From below came the heavy report of a pistol fired indoors.

The lights went out.

In darkness the three detectives collided with one another going through the doorway into the dark hall. Spade reached the stairs first. There was a clatter of footsteps below him, but nothing could be seen until he reached a bend in the stairs. Then enough light came from the street through the open front door to show the dark figure of a man standing with his back to the open door.

A flashlight clicked in Dundy's hand—he was at Spade's heels—and threw a glaring white beam of light on the man's face. He was Ira Binnett. He blinked in the light and pointed at something on the floor in front of him.

Dundy turned the beam of his light down on the floor. Jarboe lay there on his face, bleeding from a bullet hole in the back of his head.

Spade grunted softly.

Tom Polhaus came blundering down the stairs, Wallace Binnett close behind him. Joyce Court's frightened voice came from farther up: "Oh, what's happened? Wally, what's happened?"

"Where's the light switch?" Dundy barked.

"Inside the cellar door, under these stairs," Wallace Binnett said. "What is it?"

Polhaus pushed past Binnett towards the cellar door.

Spade made an inarticulate sound in his throat and, pushing Wallace Binnett aside, sprang up the stairs. He brushed past Joyce Court and went on, heedless of her startled scream. He was half way up the stairs to the third floor when the pistol went off up there.

He ran to Timothy Binnett's door. The door was open. He went in.

Something hard and angular struck him above his right ear, knocking him across the room, bringing him down on one knee. Something thumped and clattered on the floor just outside the door.

The lights came on.

On the floor, in the center of the room, Timothy Binnett lay on his back bleeding from a bullet wound in his left forearm. His pajama jacket was torn. His eyes were shut.

Spade stood up and put a hand to his head. He scowled at the old man on the floor, at the room, at the black automatic pistol lying on the hallway floor. He said: "Come on, you old cutthroat. Get up and sit on a chair and I'll see if I can stop that bleeding till the doctor gets here."

The man on the floor did not move.

There were footsteps in the hallway and Dundy came in, followed by the two younger Binnetts. Dundy's face was dark and furious. "Kitchen door wide open," he said in a choked voice. "They run in and out like—"

"Forget it," Spade said. "Uncle Tim is our meat." He paid no attention to Wallace Binnett's gasp, to the incredulous looks on Dundy's and Ira Binnett's faces. "Come on, get up," he said to the old man on the floor, "and tell us what it was the butler saw when he peeped through the keyhole."

The old man did not stir.

"He killed the butler because I told him the butler had peeped," Spade explained to Dundy. "I peeped, too, but

didn't see anything except that chair and the window, though we'd made enough racket by then to scare him back to bed. Suppose you take the chair apart while I go over the window." He went to the window and began to examine it carefully. He shook his head, put a hand out behind him, and said: "Give me the flashlight."

Dundy put the flashlight in his hand.

Spade raised the window and leaned out, turning the light on the outside of the building. Presently he grunted and put his other hand out, tugging at a brick a little below the sill. Presently the brick came loose. He put it on the window sill and stuck his hand into the hole its removal had made. Out of the opening, one at a time, he brought an empty black pistol holster, a partially filled box of cartridges, and an unsealed manila envelope.

Holding these things in his hands, he turned to face the others. Joyce Court came in with a basin of water and a roll of gauze and knelt beside Timothy Binnett. Spade put the holster and cartridges on a table and opened the manila envelope. Inside were two sheets of paper, covered on both sides with boldly penciled writing. Spade read a paragraph to himself, suddenly laughed, and began at the beginning again, reading aloud:

"I, Timothy Kieran Binnett, being sound of mind and body, do declare this to be my last will and testament. To my dear nephews, Ira Binnett and Wallace Bourke Binnett, in recognition of the loving kindness with which they have received me into their homes and attended my declining years, I give and bequeath, share and share alike, all my worldly possessions of whatever kind, to wit, my carcass and the clothes I stand in.

"I bequeath them, furthermore, the expense of my funeral and these memories: First, the memory of their credulity in believing that the fifteen years I spent in Sing Sing were spent in Australia; second, the memory of their optimism in supposing that those fifteen years had brought me

great wealth, and that if I lived on them, borrowed from them, and never spent any of my own money, it was because I was a miser whose hoard they would inherit; and not because I had no money except what I shook them down for; third, for their hopefulness in thinking that I would leave either of them anything if I had it; and, lastly because their painful lack of any decent sense of humor will keep them from ever seeing how funny this has all been. Signed and sealed this—’”

Spade looked up to say: “There is no date, but it’s signed Timothy Kieran Binnett with flourishes.”

Ira Binnett was purple with anger, Wallace’s face was ghastly in its pallor and his whole body was trembling. Joyce Court had stopped working on Timothy Binnett’s arm.

The old man sat up and opened his eyes. He looked at his nephews and began to laugh. There was in his laughter neither hysteria nor madness: it was sane, hearty laughter, and subsided slowly.

Spade said: “All right, now you’ve had your fun. Let’s talk about the killings.”

“I know nothing more about the first one than I’ve told you,” the old man said, “and this one’s not a killing, since I’m only—”

Wallace Binnett, still trembling violently, said painfully through his teeth: “That’s a lie. You killed Molly. Joyce and I came out of her room when we heard Molly scream, and heard the shot and saw her fall out of your room, and nobody came out afterwards.”

The old man said calmly: “Well, I’ll tell you: it was an accident. They told me there was a fellow from Australia here to see me about some of my properties there. I knew there was something funny about that somewhere”—he grinned—“not ever having been there. I didn’t know whether one of my dear nephews was getting suspicious and putting up a game on me or what, but I knew that if Wally wasn’t in on it he’d certainly try to pump the gentleman

from Australia about me and maybe I'd lose one of my free boarding houses." He chuckled.

"So I figured I'd get in touch with Ira so I could go back to his house if things worked out bad here, and I'd try to get rid of this Australian. Wally's always thought I'm half-cracked"—he leered at his nephew—"and's afraid they'll lug me off to a madhouse before I could make a will in his favor, or they'll break it if I do. You see, he's got a pretty bad reputation, what with that Stock Exchange trouble and all, and he knows no court would appoint him to handle my affairs if I went screwy—not as long as I've got another nephew"—he turned his leer on Ira—"who's a respectable lawyer. So now I know that rather than have me kick up a row that might wind me up in the madhouse, he'll chase this visitor, and I put on a show for Molly, who happened to be the nearest one to hand. She took it too seriously, though.

"I had a gun and I did a lot of raving about being spied on by my enemies in Australia and that I was going down and shoot this fellow. But she got too excited and tried to take the gun away from me, and the first thing I knew it had gone off, and I had to make these marks on my neck and think up that story about the big dark man." He looked contemptuously at Wallace. "I didn't know he was covering me up. Little as I thought of him, I never thought he'd be low enough to cover up his wife's murderer—even if he didn't like her—just for the sake of money."

Spade said: "Never mind that. Now about the butler?"

"I don't know anything about the butler," the old man replied, looking at Spade with steady eyes.

Spade said: "You had to kill him quick, before he had time to do or say anything. So you slip down the back stairs, open the kitchen door to fool people, go to the front door, ring the bell, shut the door, and hide in the shadow of the cellar door under the front steps. When Jarboe answered the doorbell you shot him—the hole was in the back of his head—pulled the light switch, just inside the cellar door, and

ducked up the back stairs in the dark and shot yourself carefully in the arm. I got up there too soon for you; so you smacked me with the gun, chucked it through the door, and spread yourself on the floor while I was shaking pinwheels out of my noodle."

The old man sniffed again. "You're just—"

"Stop it," Spade said patiently. "Don't let's argue. The first killing was an accident—all right. The second couldn't be. And it ought to be easy to show that both bullets, and the one in your arm, were fired from the same gun. What difference does it make which killing we can prove first-degree murder on? They can only hang you once." He smiled pleasantly. "And they will."

Maddened by Mystery

OR

THE DEFECTIVE DETECTIVE



S T E P H E N L E A C O C K

THE Great Detective sat in his office.

He wore a long green gown and half a dozen secret badges pinned to the outside of it.

Three or four pairs of false whiskers hung on a whisker-stand beside him.

Goggles, blue spectacles and motor glasses lay within easy reach.

He could completely disguise himself at a second's notice.

Half a bucket of cocaine and a dipper stood on a chair at his elbow.

His face was absolutely impenetrable.

A pile of cryptograms lay on the desk. The Great Detective hastily tore them open one after the other, solved them, and threw them down the cryptogram-shute at his side.

There was a rap at the door.

The Great Detective hurriedly wrapped himself in a pink domino, adjusted a pair of false black whiskers and cried, "Come in."

His secretary entered. "Ha," said the detective, "it is you!"

He laid aside his disguise.

"Sir," said the young man in intense excitement, "a mystery has been committed!"

"Hal!" said the Great Detective, his eye kindling, "is it such as to completely baffle the police of the entire continent?"

"They are so completely baffled with it," said the secretary, "that they are lying collapsed in heaps; many of them have committed suicide."

"So," said the detective, "and is the mystery one that is absolutely unparalleled in the whole recorded annals of the London police?"

"It is."

"And I suppose," said the detective, "that it involves names which you would scarcely dare to breathe, at least without first using some kind of atomiser or throat-gargle."

"Exactly."

"And it is connected, I presume, with the highest diplomatic consequences, so that if we fail to solve it England will be at war with the whole world in sixteen minutes?"

His secretary, still quivering with excitement, again answered yes.

"And finally," said the Great Detective, "I presume that it was committed in broad daylight, in some such place as the entrance of the Bank of England, or in the cloak-room of the House of Commons, and under the very eyes of the police?"

"Those," said the secretary, "are the very conditions of the mystery."

"Good," said the Great Detective, "now wrap yourself in this disguise, put on these brown whiskers and tell me what it is."

The secretary wrapped himself in a blue domino with lace insertions, then, bending over, he whispered in the ear of the Great Detective:

"The Prince of Wurtemberg has been kidnapped."

The Great Detective bounded from his chair as if he had been kicked from below.

A prince stolen! Evidently a Bourbon! The scion of one of the oldest families in Europe kidnapped. Here was a mystery indeed worthy of his analytical brain.

His mind began to move like lightning.

"Stop!" he said, "how do you know this?"

The secretary handed him a telegram. It was from the Prefect of Police of Paris. It read: "The Prince of Wurttemberg stolen. Probably forwarded to London. Must have him here for the opening day of Exhibition. £1,000 reward."

So! The Prince had been kidnapped out of Paris at the very time when his appearance at the International Exposition would have been a political event of the first magnitude.

With the Great Detective to think was to act, and to act was to think. Frequently he could do both together.

"Wire to Paris for a description of the Prince."

The secretary bowed and left.

At the same moment there was slight scratching at the door.

A visitor entered. He crawled stealthily on his hands and knees. A hearthrug thrown over his head and shoulders disguised his identity.

He crawled to the middle of the room.

Then he rose.

Great Heaven!

It was the Prime Minister of England.

"You!" said the detective.

"Me," said the Prime Minister.

"You have come in regard to the kidnapping of the Prince of Wurttemberg?"

The Prime Minister started.

"How do you know?" he said.

The Great Detective smiled his inscrutable smile.

"Yes," said the Prime Minister. "I will use no concealment. I am interested, deeply interested. Find the Prince of Wurttemberg, get him safe back to Paris and I will add £500 to the reward already offered. But listen," he said impressively as he left the room, "see to it that no attempt is made to alter the marking of the prince, or to clip his tail."

So! To clip the Prince's tail! The brain of the Great Detec-

tive reeled. So! a gang of miscreants had conspired to—but no! the thing was not possible.

There was another rap at the door.

A second visitor was seen. He wormed his way in, lying almost prone upon his stomach, and wriggling across the floor. He was enveloped in a long purple cloak. He stood up and peeped over the top of it.

Great Heaven!

It was the Archbishop of Canterbury!

“Your Grace!” exclaimed the detective in amazement—“pray do not stand, I beg you. Sit down, lie down, anything rather than stand.”

The Archbishop took off his mitre and laid it wearily on the whisker-stand.

“You are here in regard to the Prince of Wurttemberg.”

The Archbishop started and crossed himself. Was the man a magician?

“Yes,” he said, “much depends on getting him back. But I have only come to say this: my sister is desirous of seeing you. She is coming here. She has been extremely indiscreet and her fortune hangs upon the Prince. Get him back to Paris or I fear she will be ruined.”

The Archbishop regained his mitre, uncrossed himself, wrapped his cloak about him, and crawled stealthily out on his hands and knees, purring like a cat.

The face of the Great Detective showed the most profound sympathy. It ran up and down in furrows. “So,” he muttered, “the sister of the Archbishop, the Countess of Dashleigh!” Accustomed as he was to the life of the aristocracy, even the Great Detective felt that there was here intrigue of more than customary complexity.

There was a loud rapping at the door.

There entered the Countess of Dashleigh. She was all in furs.

She was the most beautiful woman in England. She strode

imperiously into the room. She seized a chair imperiously and seated herself on it, imperial side up.

She took off her tiara of diamonds and put it on the tiara-holder beside her and uncoiled her boa of pearls and put it on the pearl-stand.

"You have come," said the Great Detective, "about the Prince of Wurttemberg."

"Wretched little pup!" said the Countess of Dashleigh in disgust.

So! A further complication! Far from being in love with the Prince, the Countess denounced the young Bourbon as a pup!

"You are interested in him, I believe."

"Interested!" said the Countess. "I should rather say so. Why, I bred him!"

"You which?" gasped the Great Detective, his usually impassive features suffused with a carmine blush.

"I bred him," said the Countess, "and I've got £10,000 upon his chances, so no wonder I want him back in Paris. Only listen," she said, "if they've got hold of the Prince and cut his tail or spoiled the markings of his stomach it would be far better to have him quietly put out of the way here."

The Great Detective reeled and leaned up against the side of the room. So! The cold-blooded admission of the beautiful woman for the moment took away his breath! Herself the mother of the young Bourbon, misallied with one of the greatest families of Europe, staking her fortune on a Royalist plot, and yet with so instinctive a knowledge of European politics as to know that any removal of the hereditary birthmarks of the Prince would forfeit for him the sympathy of the French populace.

The Countess resumed her tiara.

She left.

The secretary re-entered.

"I have three telegrams from Paris," he said, "they are completely baffling."

He handed over the first telegram.

It read:

"The Prince of Wurttemberg has a long, wet snout, broad ears, very long body, and short hind legs."

The Great Detective looked puzzled.

He read the second telegram.

"The Prince of Wurttemberg is easily recognised by his deep bark."

And then the third.

"The Prince of Wurttemberg can be recognised by the patch of white hair across the centre of his back."

The two men looked at one another. The mystery was maddening, impenetrable.

The Great Detective spoke.

"Give me my domino," he said. "These clues must be followed up," then pausing, while his quick brain analysed and summed up the evidence before him—"a young man," he muttered, "evidently young since described as a 'pup,' with a long, wet snout (ha! addicted obviously to drinking), a streak of white hair across his back (a first sign of the results of his abandoned life)—yes, yes," he continued, "with this clue I shall find him easily."

The Great Detective rose.

He wrapped himself in a long black cloak with white whiskers and blue spectacles attached.

Completely disguised, he issued forth.

He began the search.

For four days he visited every corner of London.

He entered every saloon in the city. In each of them he drank a glass of rum. In some of them he assumed the disguise of a sailor. In others he entered as a soldier. Into others he penetrated as a clergyman. His disguise was perfect. Nobody paid any attention to him as long as he had the price of a drink.

The search proved fruitless.

Two young men were arrested under suspicion of being the Prince, only to be released.

The identification was incomplete in each case.
One had a long wet snout but no hair on his back.
The other had hair on his back but couldn't bark.
Neither of them was the young Bourbon.
The Great Detective continued his search.
He stopped at nothing.

Secretly, after nightfall, he visited the home of the Prime Minister. He examined it from top to bottom. He measured all the doors and windows. He took up the flooring. He inspected the plumbing. He examined the furniture. He found nothing.

With equal secrecy he penetrated into the palace of the Archbishop. He examined it from top to bottom. Disguised as a choir-boy he took part in the offices of the church. He found nothing.

Still undismayed, the Great Detective made his way into the home of the Countess of Dashleigh. Disguised as a housemaid, he entered the service of the Countess.

Then at last the clue came which gave him a solution of the mystery.

On the wall of the Countess' boudoir was a large framed engraving.

It was a portrait.

Under it was a printed legend:

THE PRINCE OF WURTEMBERG

The portrait was that of a Dachshund.

The long body, the broad ears, the unclipped tail, the short hind legs—all was there.

In the fraction of a second the lightning mind of the Great Detective had penetrated the whole mystery.

THE PRINCE WAS A DOG! ! !

Hastily throwing a domino over his housemaid's dress, he rushed to the street. He summoned a passing hansom, and in a few moments was at his house.

"I have it," he gasped to his secretary, "the mystery is solved. I have pieced it together. By sheer analysis I have

reasoned it out. Listen—hind legs, hair on back, wet snout, pup—eh, what? does that suggest nothing to you?”

“Nothing,” said the secretary; “it seems perfectly hopeless.”

The Great Detective, now recovered from his excitement, smiled faintly.

“It means simply this, my dear fellow. The Prince of Wurttemberg is a dog, a prize Dachshund. The Countess of Dashleigh bred him, and he is worth some £25,000 in addition to the prize of £10,000 offered at the Paris dog show. Can you wonder that—”

At that moment the Great Detective was interrupted by the scream of a woman.

“Great Heaven!”

The Countess of Dashleigh dashed into the room.

Her face was wild.

Her tiara was in disorder.

Her pearls were dripping all over the place.

She wrung her hands and moaned.

“They have cut his tail,” she gasped, “and taken all the hair off his back. What can I do? I am undone! I”

“Madame,” said the Great Detective, calm as bronze, “do yourself up. I can save you yet.”

“You!”

“Me!”

“How?”

“Listen. This is how. The Prince was to have been shown at Paris.”

The Countess nodded.

“Your fortune was staked on him?”

The Countess nodded again.

“The dog was stolen, carried to London, his tail cut and his marks disfigured.”

Amazed at the quiet penetration of the Great Detective, the Countess kept on nodding and nodding.

“And you are ruined?”

"I am," she gasped, and sank down on the floor in a heap of pearls.

"Madame," said the Great Detective, "all is not lost."

He straightened himself up to his full height. A look of inflexible unflexibility flickered over his features.

The honour of England, the fortune of the most beautiful woman in England was at stake.

"I will do it," he murmured.

"Rise, dear lady," he continued. "Fear nothing. I WILL IMPERSONATE THE DOG! ! !"

That night the Great Detective might have been seen on the deck of the Calais packet boat with his secretary. He was on his hands and knees in a long black cloak, and his secretary had him on a short chain.

He barked at the waves exultingly and licked the secretary's hand.

"What a beautiful dog," said the passengers.

The disguise was absolutely complete.

The Great Detective had been coated over with mucilage to which dog hairs had been applied. The markings on his back were perfect. His tail, adjusted with an automatic coupler, moved up and down responsive to every thought. His deep eyes were full of intelligence.

Next day he was exhibited in the Dachshund class at the International show.

He won all hearts.

"*Quel beau chien!*" cried the French people.

"*Ach! was ein Dog!*" cried the Spanish.

The Great Detective took the first prize!

The fortune of the Countess was saved.

Unfortunately as the Great Detective had neglected to pay the dog tax, he was caught and destroyed by the dog-catchers. But that is, of course, quite outside of the present narrative, and is only mentioned as an odd fact in conclusion.

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